

Tang Sect 371

Chapter 371: Departure!

“Move aside,” one of the youths next to the short blue-haired youth shouted at Huo Yuhao fiercely.

In terms of appearance, they were around Huo Yuhao’s age. At most, they were only younger than him by one or two years. Next to them were five or six other students from Shrek Academy, all clad in purple uniforms, among them some pretty girls.

Huo Yuhao would never make a scene with his juniors over such an issue. He smiled slightly and moved to one side.

However, while he was magnanimous, not everyone was like him.

“Oi! Can you behave with some decorum?” a woman’s voice sounded. Someone appeared next to Huo Yuhao. Her hands were on her waist as she looked angrily at the group of young men and women. “Do you even know what courtesy is? Don’t you know that you should make way for your seniors? Move aside!”

The provocateur was naturally Nan Qiuqiu!

While Nan Qiuqiu was not as dazzling as Jiang Nannan or Wang Dong’er, she was pretty in her own right. The moment she jumped out next to Huo Yuhao, she was able to catch everyone’s attention.

The skinny youth’s eyes lit up as he said, “Wah! What a beauty! Where did you come from? Why don’t I recognize you?” Huo Yuhao and his entourage were not wearing the uniform of Shrek Academy, so naturally, they were regarded as outsiders.

Nan Qiuqiu said angrily, “Cut the crap! Move aside! If not, I’ll beat you up so badly your own mother won’t recognize you!”

The skinny youth was stunned. He mumbled, “This babe is feisty indeed! Boss, what should we do?”

The youth with the blue hair, who was evidently their leader, frowned and said helplessly, “It’s fine. Real men don’t fight with women.” As he said that, he moved to the side as he tried to walk past Nan Qiuqiu.

However, Nan Qiuqiu did not give up so easily. She grabbed his arm and said, “Are you insulting women?”

“I...” The blue-haired youth was perplexed as he said, “How did I insult women?” As he said that, he shrugged his shoulders slightly, and all Nan Qiuqiu felt then was that she was grabbing onto a chunk of soft clay. Her hands slid free, and her target slipped out of her grasp.

“Wow! You still dare to resist!” Her eyes glinted, and energy started to pulsate from her body. Two yellow, two purple, and one black ring, five in total, rose from underneath her feet. Her powerful aura dominated the entire area.

“Soul King?” The skinny youth exclaimed in shock. He could not help but take a few steps back. “This aunty here is a Soul King?”

Huo Yuhao slapped his forehead. We’re in trouble now. n(-O/.v.-e-(1-(b)).1.-n

Indeed, when she heard him call her an aunty, Nan Qiuqiu, whose intentions were more playful than malicious, blew her top. She glared at the skinny youth so intently the veins on her forehead could be seen. Fire blazed in her eyes as she uttered, word-by-word, “Who...are...you...calling...aunty?”

Nan Qiuqiu was only twenty years old. While she had a nice body, how could any woman not care about her age? When she heard that, she was naturally enraged.

The skinny youth was a natural-born troublemaker. He did not appear to be afraid of trouble as he said, sticking his neck out, “I’m calling you aunty, you big-breasted bimbo! So what if you’re a Soul King? If you want to show off in front of Shrek Academy, don’t cry if I beat you up so badly your own mother won’t even recognize you!”

“Ah! Ah! Ah! I’m going to kill you!” The Ruby Dragon appeared above Nan Qiuqiu’s forehead. If not for Ye Guyi, who was holding her back, she would have already rushed forward.

“See! Even you admit that you’re old,” the skinny youth said, without a care in the world.

“Be kind with your words, junior,” said Huo Yuhao. He noticed that Nan Qiuqiu was on the verge of exploding, and so had no choice but to intervene. As he said that, he stood in front of Nan Qiuqiu.

The skinny youth was just about to retort, but then saw the clear light in Huo Yuhao’s eyes. His eyes glazed over as he said, “Oh.”

Including the blue-haired youth, the entire group of Grade 4 students from the outer courtyard all felt as if Huo Yuhao’s warm gaze was staring straight at them. Their brains were all in a complete mess.

“Move aside.”

“Okay.” The group of young men and women all moved aside.

Huo Yuhao turned around and dragged Nan Qiuqiu into the academy with everyone else.

“Why are you dragging me? I’m going to kill them all! They dared to call me an aunty! Am I that old?” Nan Qiuqiu was about to rush back outside, but the hand Huo Yuhao was grabbing her with felt as solid as gold. No matter how much she struggled, she could feel a powerful energy coming from his hand, making her soul power and spiritual power tremble. There was no way she could break free of him!

“If you continue to cause trouble, you don’t need to come with us anymore. Stay at the Tang Sect,” intoned Huo Yuhao.

As she looked at his serious expression, Nan Qiuqiu suddenly felt a sense of fear rising in her heart for no apparent reason. The anger in her heart was a fire that was just now doused by cold water. She became much calmer.

“Alright, alright! There’s no need to be so fierce!” Nan Qiuqiu’s tone dipped.

Huo Yuhao let go of her hand, smiled thinly at her, and said, “Am I that fierce? Let’s go, we’re going to Sea God’s Island!”

Xu Sanshi walked behind them as he said in a bored tone, “So boring! If they really fight, wouldn’t that be a sight? Qiuqiu is a hot little chili, indeed. What a volatile personality!”

He Caitou smiled slightly and said, "Screw that! You should stop causing trouble, too. Let's go!"

Xu Sanshi chuckled and said, "We're all youths, and should behave as such. Brother Ji, am I right?"

"Go!" Ji Juechen replied in his typical clipped fashion.

At the gate of Shrek Academy, the group students from Grade 4 finally cleared their heads. The skinny youth mumbled, "What happened? What's going on? I feel like I'm floating."

The youth with the short blue hair turned serious as he said, "We appear to have been manipulated. That person was so strong! Do you know who he is?"

A girl said, "I've never seen him before! Judging by his age, he should be about as old as us. However, why don't I have any impression of him?"

The youth with the short hair said, "He called us juniors, so he must be someone from the Academy. Could he be a senior from the inner courtyard? Right! He must be! If not, how could his spiritual power be so strong?"

A hawker next to him could not help, but interject, "Young brother, stop thinking about it! You can't afford to piss that guy off. He's known as the most talented student Shrek Academy has seen in the last thousand years!"

The blue-haired youth turned to look at the man in shock and asked, "Uncle, you know him?"

The hawker nodded and said, "Of course I do. Five to six years ago, he had a stall here too, selling grilled fish. His business was rather good. Then the Academy decided to place special emphasis on nurturing him. We've all heard his story. Once I say his name, you'll naturally know who he is! He's called Huo Yuhao!"

"Huo Yuhao?" The blue-haired youth's voice jumped a few octaves. His eyes were filled with shock. The group of Grade 4 students behind him all appeared paralyzed.

The skinny youth's face turned pale, and then green as he said, "I... I told Senior Huo to make way for me. Heavens! I'm dead, I'm so dead..."

The young girl who had spoken before couldn't help but ask the hawker, "Uncle, so that person just now was the Huo Yuhao? The champion who seized the championship from the jaws of defeat in the last Continental Advanced Soul Master Academy Soul Dueling Tournament, who also represented the Tang Sect and defeated an evil Soul Sage in the most recent tournament? The one born with twin martial souls and an Ultimate martial soul, who is also known as the top genius from Shrek Academy?"

The hawker mumbled, "I don't know all those titles, but the name Huo Yuhao is rare. There appears to be only one guy from the Academy with that name."

The blue-haired youth mumbled to himself, "It's him, it must be him! One of Senior Yuhao's martial souls is Spirit Eyes! Just now, when we saw him, he used some power in his eyes. We passed by our idol just like that! Let's go! We must apologize to our senior!"

As he said that, he turned and ran in the other direction. The others followed him. However, when they reached the shore of the Sea God's Lake, they could not see anyone from the Tang Sect. All they saw was a few small, black dots stepping onshore in the middle of the lake.

The blue-haired youth sighed and muttered, "We missed our chance. We really missed our chance!"

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Huo Yuhao naturally did not know about how his juniors reacted to the discovery of his identity. Now, he was back with his companions on Sea God's Island.

Every time he returned, he would sense a warm feeling that made him happy. However, it was different this time, because someone was missing.

At the Sea God's Pavilion, Huo Yuhao did not enter straightaway. Instead, he knelt in front of the blooming golden tree and kowtowed three times. It was his way of honoring Elder Mu.

"Teacher, I'm back. I think I've found the path that you talked about," Huo Yuhao mumbled softly.

A clear gust of wind blew, and the tree leaves on the golden tree danced. The tree emitted a faint compassionate aura.

"Get up. Have you recovered?" Elder Xuan's voice rang out from the Sea God's Pavilion.

Huo Yuhao stood up and said respectfully, "Yes. Hello, Elder Xuan!"

Elder Xuan replied, "Come in!"

Not everyone could enter the Sea God's Pavilion. Bei Bei and Xu Sanshi naturally knew this rule. Nan Qiuqiu and Ye Guyi, who were not as familiar with the rules of Shrek Academy, were brought to wait at one side. Huo Yuhao entered the Sea God's Pavilion alone.

Elder Xuan sat at the head of a long table. He was not alone. The other elders of the Sea God's Pavilion, including Zhang Lexuan, were all present. There was only one empty chair.

Elder Xuan nodded at Huo Yuhao and said, "When you were undergoing your closed-door cultivation, Bei Bei took over your spot temporarily. Now that you're back, please take up your seat once more."

"Yes," Huo Yuhao replied respectfully. He bowed to the other elders before walking to the seat at the table and sitting down. He lowered his head slightly, appearing extremely respectful.

Elder Xuan looked at him and said, "Yuhao, you've grown. After Dong'er got into trouble, I was afraid that you might not recover from it. Now, I see that you've managed to hold yourself together. Your powers have improved greatly, too. Very good! I believe Elder Mu's spirit would rejoice at the sight of you now, too! You are indeed his chosen one."

Huo Yuhao said respectfully, "Grief solves nothing. While Dong'er sleeps, all I can do is continually improve myself. After she wakes up, I'll be better able to protect her."

"Good that you know," Elder Xuan said gladly. "Now that everyone is here, the meeting of the Sea God's Pavilion shall start. We have only one thing on the agenda, and that's the mission!"

The meeting lasted for more than four hours.

Fortunately, Xu Sanshi and He Caitou both had places to stay in the inner courtyard. After waiting for a while, they brought Ji Juechen, Jing Ziyan, and the rest away to eat before coming back to wait some more.

After one entire afternoon, Huo Yuhao finally emerged from the Sea God's Pavilion. He did not say anything to them. All he told them was that they would be moving out tomorrow before he brought everyone back to the Tang Sect.

As they left Shrek Academy, it was still lesson time. This time, they naturally did not meet any juniors. Xu Sanshi felt a twinge of regret.

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Back at the Tang Sect, everyone busied themselves. They packed their daily necessities and brought out everything they needed to use. Those from the Tang Sect would play a big role in the plan the Sea God's Pavilion had come up with. For everyone to return peacefully, Bei Bei opened the warehouse of the Tang Sect to let them pick what they needed.

The first thing Huo Yuhao took out was the giant Heart Protecting Mirror made out of Starlight Sapphire, which had once held the Illustrious Virtue Hall's human-shaped soul tool, and which he had been keeping safe for Dong'er. With the Heartprotecting Mirror on him, he and He Caitou started to gear up.

They worked until midnight, and only then did Huo Yuhao find Xuan Ziwen. After he left his room, he had another Starlight Sapphire Ring on him.

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In the morning the next day, Bei Bei personally brought everyone from the Tang Sect out to send them off. They only went back after the team left Shrek City.

Huo Yuhao's flying-type soul tool was now Grade 7. This one was made personally by Xuan Ziwen. It was both fast, agile, and defensively strong. Furthermore, it was customized to his needs, according to his measurements. Of course, this was possible only because Huo Yuhao had managed to get enough materials from the Sun Moon Empire the last time he was there!

Huo Yuhao jumped into the air, and a light flashed in his eyes. He did not release his martial soul, but the Grade 7 soul tool on his back opened.

The soul tool looked odd. It resembled a pair of butterfly wings, each of which had thrusters built in. In total, there were twelve, six on top and six below, aligned at different heights. When the dozen thrusters activated together, he was able to reach top speed.

Chapter 372.1: The Plan Starts

Huo Yuhao personally asked Xuan Ziwen to make this flying-type soul tool for him. It carried all his longing for Dong'er.

Quickly, everyone rose a thousand meters into the air. At that height, they could barely see what was underneath them. To an ordinary person, they would resemble birds.

Huo Yuhao flew at the front, He Caitou and Xu Sanshi flanked him. Ji Juechen, Jing Ziyang, Ye Guyi, and Nan Qiuqiu followed them.

Of those here, Ji Juechen was the most unfamiliar with flying-type soul tools. Other than his own sword, he normally did not come into contact with any other types of equipment. If not for the fact that he had a chance to fight, he might not even have come this time. As he controlled his flying-type soul tool, it was obvious that he was a rookie at it. His handsome face was ice-cold.

A Grade 7 flying-type soul tool would release a protective soul barrier for its user. This protective soul barrier underwent special treatment. Not only did it have the power of a Grade 6 protective soul barrier, but it was aerodynamic, too, helping to reduce air resistance.

Naturally, when a soul tool of this level was being used, it would deplete one's soul power greatly. Other than Ji Juechen, the rest of them were all Soul Emperors. While they could use one, they could not sustain it for long if they did not have Sealed Milk Bottles.

The technology behind Sealed Milk Bottles had already been implemented in all the soul tools manufactured by the Tang Sect. Every flying-type soul tool they were using now had four Class 6 Sealed Milk Bottles. It was not because they did not want to use superior Grade 7 ones, but it was prohibitively expensive to manufacture Grade 7 Sealed Milk Bottles. Due to the cost, Xuan Ziwen chose to use four Grade 6 Sealed Milked Bottles for them instead.

As she watched the scenery whizz past underneath her, Nan Qiuqiu could not help but exclaim excitedly. Protected by the protective soul barrier, she did not need to deal with the wind resistance.

Huo Yuhao led everyone in the direction of the Sun Moon Empire. First, they had to fly south for a bit. To the south of Shrek Academy was the Great Star Dou Forest, and after they passed it, they would enter the Star Luo Empire. He could not fly directly above the Great Star Dou Forest, as that would be suicidal. As they approached the forest, Huo Yuhao started to change directions and flew southwest. He entered the Star Luo Empire, staying dozens of kilometers away from the Great Star Dou Forest.

After that, he veered south, planning to cut through the Star Luo Empire.

The Grade 7 flying-type soul tools were fast, indeed. After two hours, they were around 250 kilometers inside the Star Luo Empire, which was also its core regions.

As they flew south, the temperature gradually rose.

Xu Sanshi could not help but ask Huo Yuhao, "Little junior brother, where are we going? Why do I feel that something is wrong?"

Huo Yuhao said, "Nothing's wrong. We have to make a big detour this time before we can enter the Sun Moon Empire. It'll take longer, but it'll ensure success."

"Okay," Xu Sanshi said after he heard that reply. He Caitou trusted Huo Yuhao, so naturally, he would not inquire further. As for the remaining four of them, their sense of direction was bad, and they could only follow...

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They left in the morning. Huo Yuhao brought everyone down to rest at noon.

Everyone ate, drank, and replenished the Sealed Milk Bottles on their flying-type soul tools. The Sealed Milk Bottles were indeed useful. They had been flying for hours, but their soul power had not been drained by much.

Huo Yuhao took out a map and examined it. Occasionally, he would nod his head.

Xu Sanshi leaned against a huge tree. He took in the southern warmth as he closed his eyes to rest.

He Caitou was nearby. He just watched Huo Yuhao. Like Huo Yuhao, he had undergone the Ultimate Soldier Plan and knew about Huo Yuhao's experience in ambushing his enemies from behind. With Yuhao's sharp spiritual power and accurate judgment, coupled with his knowledge and experience, he definitely would not go in the wrong direction.

They rested for two hours before resuming their journey. This time, Huo Yuhao made even more adjustments to their route. Quickly enough, even those who were unfamiliar with the way realized that everything they flew past seemed to be farms and wilderness. They did not pass any cities.

Nan Qiuqiu asked curiously, "Isn't the Star Luo Empire rich? Why have we not passed by any cities at all?"

Ye Guyi answer her silly question straightaway, "He's doing it deliberately!"

She was correct. Huo Yuhao purposefully avoided any cities on their route.

With the continual development of soul tools, the original three countries of the Douluo Continent had placed greater emphasis on them, especially in the area of aerial surveillance. When Huo Yuhao and Wang Qiu'er had gone to the Setting Sun Forest, they were detected by the aerial surveillance soul tools placed in Heaven Dou City, the capital of the Heavenly Soul Empire. That experience made him realize that he always had to avoid cities. After all, the range of aerial surveillance soul tools was limited, and could not cover the entire country. As long as they did not pass by cities, they should be fine.

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Just like that, they flew for another twelve 12 hours. As the sky darkened, they slowed down and prepared to descend.

Just as they were doing that, Nan Qiuqiu suddenly exclaimed, "Look over there! What's that?"

Everyone looked into the distance. The scene there touched them deeply.

It was a golden world. One could see countless rays of golden light on the horizon. The sun was slowly setting amid this golden scene.

Huo Yuhao smiled. He had achieved his initial objective.

"That's the sea. What's there to be shocked about? When the sun sets over the mountains, sunlight will shine over the sea and create this image."

Ye Guyi looked into the distance. She appeared to be in a trance. "The sun sets over the sea, what a beautiful sight..."

That was right, they were at the sea. To be accurate, they were near the southern shoreline of the Star Luo Empire. With twelve hours of flight at full speed, they had left Shrek City, cut across the entire length of the Star Luo Empire, and finally arrived at the southern shoreline of the Star Luo Empire.

Under Huo Yuhao's leadership, they had to take numerous detours away from cities, but they were able to reach the sea before sunset.

"Why is the sea there? Yuhao, tell me where we are." Jing Ziyang asked in shock.

Huo Yuhao said, "This is the southern shoreline of the Star Luo Empire. After an entire day's flight, we've made our way across the Star Luo Empire. Tomorrow, we'll head out to sea. We'll fly westward along the coast, and enter the Sun Moon Empire via the sea."

Jing Ziyang's map-reading skills might be bad, but she knew her geography. She asked in shock, "That's such a long way around! Why are you doing this?"

Huo Yuhao said, "So we can enter the Sun Moon Empire safely. We have no choice. I'm afraid the border of the Sun Moon Empire is completely covered by surveillance soul tools. It would be impossible to enter without being discovered.

"Elder Xuan decided that the rescue mission would have two teams, with one being the decoy. The powerful soul masters from the Academy are the decoy, and they'll go by the more obvious route. We'll go by the lesser-known route. Elder Xuan's team will attract the attention of the Sun Moon Empire. Our goal is to rescue our targets."

Jing Ziyang inhaled and said, "How many people were caught? 400? 500? With just a few of us, can we really save all of them?"

Huo Yuhao chuckled and said, "You may think it's impossible, and the enemy thinks so, too. As long as they can see Elder Xuan and the higher echelons of Shrek Academy, they'll naturally let their guard down. Furthermore, you've forgotten something. The people we're out to save are no ordinary people. Each and every one of them is immensely powerful!"

Jing Ziyang finally understood the target and plan of this rescue operation.

Huo Yuhao said loudly, "Everyone, perk up! We'll rest by the seaside. At night, I'll catch and grill fish for everyone!"

After they worked hard for the entire day, eating was more important to them than anything else. When they heard these words, their speed increased visibly. They all flew toward the sea, the waters dazzling in the setting sun, like swallows toward a tree.

While it looked near, it was actually still pretty far. They had to fly for another hour before they reached the coast. When they landed, the sky was completely dark.

"Guyi, come and catch fish with me," Huo Yuhao said as he gestured toward her.

"Why me?" Ye Guyi asked curiously.

"You can make some light for me! Fishes love bright spots."

“You’re... you’re using my Holy Angel as a source of light?” Ye Guyi was visibly irritated.

Huo Yuhao looked at her and said, “Well, if you don’t want to eat later, then I won’t do so.”

Ye Guyi glared at him angrily, then remembered that Xu Sanshi had once said that Huo Yuhao’s grilled fish was extremely tasty. Eventually, she relented. She pursed her lips and unwillingly released her angelic wings, flying out above the sea.

Huo Yuhao smiled. Moving on the tips of his feet, he jumped straight out into the middle of the sea.

Ye Guyi looked down from the sky to look at Huo Yuhao. To her surprise, Huo Yuhao was not using his flying-type soul tool. Instead, he walked on the water as he headed out into the sea.

Chapter 372.2: The Plan Starts

While a flying-type soul tool could accelerate quickly, it was harder to control than martial souls at low speed. Ye Guyi wanted to him slip up, but Huo Yuhao was walking casually as if he were at home on the waves.

How does he do it? Does he really have five soul rings?

Ye Guyi was shocked as she thought about it.

Quickly, she discovered how Huo Yuhao was able to stand on the water. With each step he took, parts of the sea would freeze into ice, which could hold his weight. This prevented him from sinking straight away, so he could stand on top of the sea as if it were nothing to him.

This guy... is abnormal!

Ye Guyi sighed and hurried over.

The seawater was clear-blue, and one could see the bottom. Even though the sun had set, the light from Ye Guyi’s Holy Angel allowed her to see the beautiful and enthralling underwater world.

Huo Yuhao did not walk too far out into the sea. There were ten times more soul beasts in the ocean than on land. Other than a few aquatic soul masters who lived near the sea, very few people dared to venture out into the sea without knowing the behavior and patterns of the soul beasts who lived there.

“Guyi, shine brighter!” Huo Yuhao said as he gestured toward Ye Guyi, who was above his head.

Ye Guyi turned her head to the side as if she had not heard him,

“Stop fooling around, aren’t you hungry?” Huo Yuhao spoke as if he were coaxing a younger sister, though Ye Guyi was older than him by five to six years. n0**VE-IB**-1n

“Hmph!” Ye Guyi said. Her two wings then lit up. Warm golden light cascaded from the sky. Night may have just fallen over this boundless sea, but the light from her wings over the water was a beautiful sight to behold.

Just like Huo Yuhao had said, fishes loved light. After a short time, he could see schools of fish swimming in the water underneath him.

“How do you plan to catch them? We have many people, and we’ll eat a lot,” Ye Guyi asked Huo Yuhao curiously. While she was powerful, her survival skills were mediocre at best. Ever since she was young, she had devoted all her energy to training. She had probably never done any chores in her life. Hence, while she liked to eat nice food, she was more curious about how this youth who had beaten her up, would cook the fish...

“Watch and see,” Huo Yuhao replied with a smile. A clear blue light shone from his body. The moment it appeared, the water underneath him froze. Ye Guyi noticed that Huo Yuhao was now standing on solid ice.

An area with a radius of 2.5 meters around him had frozen over. The motion of the waves quickly lifted the block of ice up. Huo Yuhao seemed to be standing on an iceberg. In the middle of the iceberg, many of the fish still looked as if they were swimming. At least a hundred of them were frozen inside.

“This... isn’t this too simple and brutish?” Ye Guyi asked dazedly.

Huo Yuhao smiled at her and said, “Sometimes, simplicity is beautiful. Let’s go.” As he said that, he waved his hands behind him, and two gusts of wind blew out. The ice underneath his feet started to slide across the waves toward solid land.

This is possible? How interesting! Ye Guyi had always been curious about Huo Yuhao. After she saw him fish with this method, she could not help but be even more intrigued.

Only Ye Guyi and Nan Qiuqiu had never done any form of chores in their lives before. By the time Huo Yuhao reached the shore, He Caitou and Xu Sanshi had already started a fire with some wood they found. A pot of water was boiling.

Ji Juechen was silent, but he was not someone who would not help. Earlier, he had helped cut the firewood. Jing Ziyan had built the bonfire and placed the pot over it.

At this moment, Nan Qiuqiu stood nearby, blushing because she had not done anything at all. At first, she had wanted to help Jing Ziyan, but the moment she tried to help, she knocked over the pot. Instantly, Xu Sanshi asked her to move to the side. If not, there would be no soup that night.

Huo Yuhao walked over and chuckled, “Our preparations are almost done! I shall start. Second senior brother, cook up some vegetable soup. We can’t just eat grilled fish. I’ll put two fish in the vegetable soup so it’ll taste better.”

Food was naturally one of the components taught in the Ultimate Solider Plan. While Huo Yuhao did not dare to say that he recognized all edible fish, he was able to recognize over sixty percent of them.

He picked up a few branches to skewer the fish, then went back to the ocean. With Ultimate Ice, he could not only freeze water into ice, but he could also allow ice to melt back into water. As every fresh fish passed his hands, he was able to wash all of them quickly. He skewered them on branches and then placed them on top of some leaves He Caitou had found.

Huo Yuhao’s movements were deft. Ye Guyi watched him with delight and wanted to help him. However, the moment she tried to do so, she realized that this simple task was not as simple as it seemed. She spent a long time skewering a single fish, piercing through its belly and making a huge mess

of its scales. She even got fish blood on her hands. The end result was that the poor fish was burned to a crisp in a fit of rage by her holy flames.

While she was unwilling to concede defeat, Ye Guyi did not try to help after she washed her hands. She believed it to be a form of mercy for the fish, as they could enter her stomach whole.

She sat on the beach and watched Huo Yuhao's nimble but unrushed movements. Her mind started to drift.

She looked at the guy, who was not really that handsome, and at most had a nice body. She had seen many guys who were more handsome than him. However, under the glow of moonlight, he appeared to have a special charisma as he processed the fish.

Guys look the best when they're working. This thought swirled in her mind.

"Stop looking, I already have a master." Huo Yuhao looked up and flashed a smile at her, interrupting her reverie.

Ye Guyi felt her heart go cold. Huo Yuhao's tone was mirthful as he poked fun at her like a friend. However, he also seemed to be reminding her of something.

This made Ye Guyi uncomfortable, and she shot back shrilly, "So what if I stare at you? Looking at you, do you think I'll fall for you? Hmph!" As she said that, she stood up, turned around, and headed back toward the bonfire.

Huo Yuhao shook his head helplessly as he thought, "Please don't fall for me! However, did you realize that you've been sitting next to me for the past half hour?"

As he thought about that, he wrapped the hundred fish in banana leaves before heading back toward the bonfire.

On the other side, Nan Qiuqiu was already poking fun at Ye Guyi quietly. The two girls sat there mumbling to themselves. Under the glow of the bonfire, Ye Guyi seemed to be blushing.

When Huo Yuhao returned, he immediately started to grill the fish. He had already prepared the condiments and seasoning. Through his skills, he demonstrated his culinary abilities to those who had never eaten his grilled fish before!

It was faster to eat than to grill. Only after he grilled his sixtieth fish did Huo Yuhao get to have his first bite.

The fish soup was fresh. The grilled fish was crispy on the outside and tender on the inside. Moonlight shone down on the sea from the sky. The group of young men and women sat by the bonfire. It was a scene worth remembering.

The tasty dinner washed away the fatigue from the day. After dinner, they sat around the bonfire to meditate without even building tents, rotating the guard every two hours.

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After a silent night, Huo Yuhao and the rest set off once more. Like he said yesterday, he led everyone to fly out over the sea.

After they flew five kilometers out over the sea, the shoreline finally became blurry. Only then did Huo Yuhao change directions and start to head west.

They flew much faster above the sea, as they did not need to take detours. However, Huo Yuhao did not dare to lead everyone too far out into the sea, because there were many aquatic soul beasts out there. The most powerful ones were legendary and could rival, or even surpass, the kings of soul beasts in the Great Star Dou Forest.

After four hours, they finally crossed the border of the Sun Moon Empire. Huo Yuhao had no choice but to bring everyone further out to sea.

Both the Star Luo Empire and the Sun Moon Empire were not adept at naval warfare, but this did not mean that they had no naval defenses. They were both afraid of a naval invasion, and so they each stationed navies at their common border. However, their navies were not large, and there were only a few soul tools on their ships. Comparing the two, the Sun Moon Empire's navy was stronger.

It was not that they did not want to develop their navies, but on the Douluo Continent, the presence of aquatic soul beasts hindered the development of navies. Once a navy became too large, aquatic soul beasts would attack. There was no chance of them ever entering the deep sea.

This was also why, before the Sun Moon Continent and the Douluo Continents slammed together, the three countries of the Douluo Continent did not even know of the existence of the Sun Moon Continent. In this world, because of the presence of aquatic soul beasts, ocean exploration was impossible!

As it was impossible to develop naval forces, land battles were paramount in importance!

Chapter 372.3: The Plan Starts

They skirted past the two opposing navies. As they flew out over the deep sea, some seagull-type oceanic soul beasts attacked Huo Yuhao and his team. However, they were not powerful enough to threaten the group and were easily dealt with.

After they skirted around the two navies and entered the territory of the Sun Moon Empire, Huo Yuhao directed his team to fly closer to the shoreline before flying ahead. They did not rest. When the soul power of their flying-type soul tools was depleted to a certain extent, they would immediately replenish them with filled Sealed Milk Bottles.

After they flew for another four hours, they soon approached Huo Yuhao's second designated location. This was a city near the southern coast of the Sun Moon Empire called Seajoy City. Seajoy City was located near the southern sea of the Sun Moon Empire and could be considered a big city. It was built on the Sun Moon Empire's greatest natural port, Sun Moon Harbor.

While ships could not enter the deep sea, progress in soul engineering technology ensured that ships sailing near the coast would be safe. After all, transport by sea was easier than transport by land, as it required less manpower and logistics. It would, however, require a greater upfront investment.

Everyone could see Sun Moon Harbor in the distance. However, Huo Yuhao did not fly there straightaway with his companions. Instead, they landed near the coast around five kilometers away from Sun Moon Harbor and Seajoy City. There, everyone changed into the style of clothing worn by the people of the Sun Moon Empire. Only then did they head toward Seajoy City on foot.

Seajoy City could not compare with Radiant City or Shrek City. Relative to the cities of the continent, it was considered medium-sized.

Perhaps because of its rather inaccessible location, Seajoy City's security was much less strict. Huo Yuhao and the rest were able to enter it easily.

Seajoy City's buildings were different from those in the inland cities of the Sun Moon Empire. The city did not have the tall buildings of Radiant City, but more of the characteristics of a fishing village by the sea. They all looked extremely sturdy, as they were probably designed to withstand sea storms. The buildings of Seajoy City were all located on higher ground, while Sun Moon Harbor was located on a downward slope.

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They first found a medium-sized hotel to settle down in. After flying for almost half a day, they needed time to rest.

"Qiuqiu, come and walk with me," Huo Yuhao gestured to Nan Qiuqiu.

Nan Qiuqiu looked at Ye Guyi next to her, and said, "Ask Sister Guyi instead. Why me?"

Huo Yuhao's face darkened as he said, "What did I say before we came out? You have to obey all orders. If you don't want to listen to my instructions, you can go back by yourself."

Nan Qiuqiu stuck out her tongue and said crossly, "There's no need to be so fierce. I'll go with you!" As she said that, she shot an odd look at Ye Guyi. Ye Guyi blushed, and her hips moved slightly. Then, Nan Qiuqiu ran out with a smile.

Huo Yuhao said, "Take this time to rest, guys. In the meantime, you can replenish the soul power in our Sealed Milk Bottles. We'll come back soon."

Xu Sanshi said, "Go, we'll be fine here."

Huo Yuhao did not dare to delay. He was afraid of this young mistress. Heaven knew what kind of trouble she would cause.

He followed her outside and saw that she was not far away. Only then did he relax. He rushed over and said, "Come, hold my arm."

Nan Qiuqiu was startled. She jumped to one side as she stared at him warily and said, "What are you doing? Don't even think about taking advantage of me! Back in the hotel, there's someone who's dying for you to do that to her. What's wrong? Have you fallen for me?"

Huo Yuhao slapped his forehead and said helplessly, "Can you stop being so perverted? Do you want to save your mother or not?"

Nan Qiuqiu said angrily, "Saving my mother doesn't mean I have to sacrifice my virtue! Stop using this to threaten me!"

The muscles on Huo Yuhao's face twitched as he said, "Okay, fine. Go back and get Ye Guyi to come. Tell her that we need to pretend to be a couple."

"Pretend to be a couple? For what?" Nan Qiuqiu's wariness was replaced by curiosity.

Huo Yuhao said angrily, "This is our disguise! We pretend to be a couple to gather information. If not, why would I want you to hold my arm?"

"You should have made yourself clearer," Nan Qiuqiu replied with a snort. Only then did she shuffle over unwillingly and she held his arm. However, she grabbed the inner portion of his shirt with two of her fingers.

Huo Yuhao sighed and said, "Sometimes I feel that it was a mistake for elder brother to let you tag along. Let's go." As he said that, he strode forward with big steps.

Nan Qiuqiu's mouth twitched as she said, "I'm a proper girl. What if I become pregnant pretending to be your girlfriend?"

Huo Yuhao almost stumbled and fell. His arm trembled as he pushed Nan Qiuqiu's hand to one side as he said, "Fine, you win, mistress. Let's pretend to be brother and sister, alright? You won't have to 'suffer' so much like this. I'm truly in awe at how you think holding hands can lead to pregnancy."

With that, he ignored her as he continued to walk forward.

"Oi! Why are you so fierce? This time, you're in the wrong! There's no way for you to pretend to be my older brother. I should be your elder sister instead! I'm older than you! Oi, stop walking so fast, wait for me!"

Huo Yuhao was afraid that he might really blow his top because of Nan Qiuqiu, and hence he walked ahead quickly. In his heart, he felt frustrated and helpless, but a smile crept across his face. This seemingly dumb and proud girl was indeed interesting. Ever since Dong'er fell into a deep slumber, he was finally able to relax a bit, even though it was because he was dealing with such petty issues.

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As he walked down the street, Huo Yuhao bought some interesting local delicacies, such as dried fish, scallops, and some dried meat. He also bought a map of Seajoy City and its Sun Moon Harbor.

Nan Qiuqiu ultimately decided to be his girlfriend. While she did not like it, she held his hand.

"Why are you buying all this? They don't look very tasty! Speaking of food, your grilled fish yesterday was excellent. Make more next time, it's praiseworthy!"

Huo Yuhao said in a low voice, "I don't need your praise. From now on, try not to talk. Just smile."

"Why can't I talk? I want to talk."

"Save your mother! Save your mother!"

“Hmph!”

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After making two rounds through the city following the instructions on the map, he finally stopped in front of building with a pointy top. He did not enter it immediately, but instead turned to look at Nan Qiuqiu and said, “After we enter, say nothing, is that clear? Listen to my instructions. If not, you can go back.”

“Alright, I’ll keep quiet,” Nan Qiuqiu agreed unwillingly.

Huo Yuhao sighed in relief, but just as he was about to enter, Nan Qiuqiu said, “Have you realized that Sister Guyi seems to like you?”

Huo Yuhao missed a step, and he turned back and glared at her, saying angrily, “Shut your mouth, is that clear?”

“Alright!” Nan Qiuqiu shut her mouth unwillingly, but she continued to mumble, “I don’t know what Sister Guyi sees in you. So fierce, hmph!”

Huo Yuhao did not bring Ye Guyi out because he sensed that she was looking at him oddly. Last night, it was clear from the way she watched him prepare the fish. Maybe she did not like him, but she was definitely curious about him. Huo Yuhao was quite sensitive to this. Qiu’er and Dong’er were already fighting for him. He could not blame Qiu’er for it, but he definitely did not want anyone else to fall for him!

However, he regretted it now. Bringing Nan Qiuqiu out was torture! Had he known that, he would have brought Ye Guyi out. At least she was more normal!

There was a sign on the pointed building, which bore the words Sun Moon Harbor Shipping Company.

After he entered the door, he was greeted with a bustling sight. The main hall was wide; at least four hundred square meters in area. There were ten counters, all of which were manned by busy staff. It was not particularly clean, and one could smell the reek of salt rot. Nan Qiuqiu could not help but frown. Huo Yuhao pinched her, stopping her from complaining about the place.

Huo Yuhao looked around at his surroundings before walking to a counter. The counter was empty, except for a middle-aged woman sitting on the other side.

“Hello, may I ask what the prices are for renting a boat?” After staying in the Sun Moon Empire for two years, he was able to imitate the local accent almost perfectly. Furthermore, he deliberately lowered the sound of his voice, making it hard to hear him clearly in this bustling place.

“Renting a boat? Little boy, why do you want to rent a boat? Don’t you know the ocean is unsafe?” The middle-aged woman looked at Huo Yuhao and waved him away impatiently.

Nan Qiuqiu, who was next to Huo Yuhao, almost laughed. “Little boy, what a nice moniker!”

Huo Yuhao said calmly, “Sister, it’s not right to say that. While I’m young, this doesn’t mean I can’t do business! I want to rent a cargo ship that can transport around five thousand kilos of goods.”

“You want to ship something? Where?” The middle-aged woman finally perked up.

Huo Yuhao said, “To Pegasus Harbor in the east. How much will it cost?” Pegasus Harbor was located near the eastern seaboard of the Sun Moon Empire. It was near the Star Luo Empire’s naval base, which faced the Sun Moon Empire’s fleet. It was the easternmost port of the Sun Moon Empire and was just a bit smaller than Sun Moon Harbor.

The middle-aged woman said, “A cargo ship that can carry five thousand kilos of goods to Pegasus Harbor? It’ll cost at least twelve hundred golden soul coins. Little fellow, it isn’t cheap!”

Huo Yuhao said, “Money is no issue, but I want to know if it’s safe. Also, what kind of cargo ship can you provide?”

Chapter 373.1: All Sides Making Their Moves

This was where Huo Yuhao demonstrated his intelligence. His questions were very precise, and so he did not arouse his the woman’s suspicions.

After some haggling, Huo Yuhao was able to rent, at an exorbitant price, a cargo ship one hundred and fifty meters long, which could carry ten thousand kilograms worth of goods. This cargo ship was equipped with ten Class 3 soul cannons, manned by ten Class 3 soul engineers. It was not cheap. In total, Huo Yuhao had to pay out forty-five hundred gold soul coins.

Huo Yuhao paid one-third of the deposit up-front. He would load his goods after one week.

He put his receipt away and started to leave the Sun Moon Harbor Shipping Company with Nan Qiuqiu. A look of joy flashed in his eyes. His preparations were sound.

However, not long after he left the building, he was blocked by some men.

They were all muscular and rugged, and smelled of the ocean. They stood in a row, completely blocking the rather narrow street.

“What do you want?” Before Huo Yuhao could say anything, Nan Qiuqiu had already opened her mouth.

Among the four buff men, the leader smiled and said, “We don’t want much. We noticed that you’ve just rented a huge ship, and we think you’ll need some men to help you out. Hence, we’ve decided to offer you our services to help you transport these goods. How about it?”

While he seemed to be asking, his tone was off.

Huo Yuhao said plainly, “There’s no need. We have enough men on our own. Don’t find trouble with us, we’re backed by a major chamber of commerce.”

The leader laughed and said, “So what if you’re backed by a chamber of commerce? We’re Bluebeard’s men. Have you heard of him?”

Bluebeard??Huo Yuhao and Nan Qiuqiu naturally did not know who he was. They looked at each other. Nan Qiuqiu looked dumbfounded, but Huo Yuhao’s eyes were soon clouded with fear.

“You’re... you’re Bluebeard’s men? What do you want?”

The one in charge was satisfied with Huo Yuhao's reaction as he said, "Let's find a quiet place to speak." As he said that, the three of them advanced forward menacingly, surrounding Huo Yuhao and Nan Qiuqiu.

Huo Yuhao looked scared, but his right hand grabbed Nan Qiuqiu's arm tightly, stopping her from acting rashly. They were led down a quiet and empty alley by these big men.

Once they were well into the alley, the leader said with a leer, "Young man, it seems that you know about Bluebeard. There's nothing more to say then. For the safety of your goods, you have to pay tolls. As Bluebeard's men, we'll follow the rules. We don't want much from you, just one-third of the value of your goods. When you load them onto the ship later, we'll come down to do an estimate. By coming down today, we're just making sure you know of our presence. At the same time, we're giving you a chance. It's just a formality!" As he said this, he extended his right hand and rubbed his thumb, index finger, and middle finger together.

The fear quickly faded from Huo Yuhao's face as he let go of Nan Qiuqiu's hand.

"Qiuqiu, I know that you have been trying to hold it in for the whole day. Here's your chance. These men are pirates. Destroy them humanely, and try and keep it clean."

After he said that, he immediately started to walk away.

"Rascal, where do you think you're going?" one of the brawny men shouted. He was already trying to grab Huo Yuhao.

However, at this moment, a ray of pink light shot out from next to Huo Yuhao. It landed on the man, who collapsed before he could even shout.

With Huo Yuhao's cultivation and spiritual power, he had already seen that of the four buff men, only the leader was a Rank 20 Soul Grandmaster. The rest were just normal men who were a tad more muscular.

Pirates of the Sun Moon Empire? How could they be good?

There were bursts of curses, cries, and grunts coming from behind him, which stopped extremely quickly. Before Huo Yuhao could even walk out from the alley, he could smell perfume coming up from behind him.

Nan Qiuqiu dusted her hands off and said unhappily, "Not fun, they were all too weak. This doesn't satisfy me. You're a sly fellow indeed, tricking them here before striking!"

Huo Yuhao turned to look at her, and hissed, "Qiuqiu, grow some brains! Did you want to kill them out in the open? Wouldn't that reveal who we are? Let's head back!"

He was pleased with how Nan Qiuqiu had handled it. The Light of Annihilation annihilated more than just soul power. The alley was spotless, and without a single trace of a fight.

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He did not rush to leave, but instead stayed one night in Seajoy City. The next morning, just as the sky was brightening, the Tang Sect resumed their journey. This time, they did not fly.

Huo Yuhao dictated that they would not continue their journey by air. The Sun Moon Empire had the most surveillance-type soul tools of all the countries on the continent. Every city was guarded by them, and they might even have some planted in the wilderness!

With their strength, they would need around two days to reach their destination by land. Sunrise City, where the hostages were kept, was located in the south of the Sun Moon Empire. They made their detour so as to not expose their identities.

They resumed their journey, but did not travel off the beaten path. Instead, they went by the main roads, and they moved ahead at full speed.

Every time they ran into other travelers, Huo Yuhao would use Imitation to make them invisible. They were thus able to bypass the other travelers without being noticed, and without slowing down. As they moved forward, they did not encounter any difficulties.

As the Tang Sect moved quickly toward Sunrise City, a bunch of other uninvited guests appeared near the Sun Moon Empire's border.

Elder Xuan flew at the forefront, Elder Song next to him. With the two of them in the lead, they were followed by other elders, as well as the Dean of Shrek Academy, Yan Shaozhe, and the Vice-Dean of the Soul Tool Department, Qian Duoduo.

While there were only eight of them, their combined power was nearly unprecedented in history.

Qian Duoduo had recently risen to Rank 95, and formally become a Transcendent Douluo. Hence, it could be said that all eight of them were Transcendent Douluo. Their combined power was even higher than when they had last taken action during the tournament.

"Xuan Zi, do we really need to do this? It's completely against the rules," Elder Song said in a low voice, frowning.

Elder Xuan smiled and said, "So, the actions of the Sun Moon Empire are legal? After the Continental Elite Youth Soul Master Tournament, they stopped so many team members from the various teams, and even detained and imprisoned some of them. That's against the rules, too."

Elder Song sighed and said, "The Sun Moon Empire is committing a grave sin. I'm afraid the evil soul masters..."

Elder Xuan shook his head and said, "They dare not. In terms of soul engineers and overall strength, the Heavenly Soul Empire and the Star Luo Empire are weaker than the Sun Moon Empire. However, in terms of soul masters only, they are not afraid. Unless the evil soul masters are seeking death, or are using all their strength, they would not dare to do anything. Let's go. If we don't create a ruckus, what can Yuhao do? He should be in the Sun Moon Empire by now."

"How could you consent to Huo Yuhao taking part in this operation?" Elder Song asked.

Elder Xuan waved his hand dismissively. "Old Song, don't be too fixated on the past. Yuhao appears to be quite different now. Furthermore, the Ultimate Soldier Plan isn't supposed to raise a flower in a

greenhouse, right? If he doesn't experience hardship, how can he better himself? As long as we make a big enough ruckus, he should be safe."

"Alright," Elder Song agreed with a reluctant nod.

Elder Xuan led them forward, and soon was in Sun Moon Empire airspace.

As this was the border, the density of surveillance-type soul tools was the highest here. Instantly, seven or eight high-altitude surveillance soul tools locked onto his position.

Elder Xuan smiled, and pressed forward with his right palm. An intense yellow light shone from his body.

Instantly, the sky appeared to collapse. An incomparably powerful aura radiated out from him. The high-altitude surveillance soul tools that had detected Elder Xuan all started to whine loudly. Even as they sensed the power of their target, they were all affected by it.

The high-altitude surveillance soul tools were built on the foundation of Sealed Milk Bottles, which provided them with enough soul power to spend a long time in the air. However, as Elder Xuan's soul power fluctuations were too vigorous, it caused the soul power in the Sealed Milk Bottles to react adversely.

Bang! Dazzling fireworks burst out nearby.

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang... A series of explosions, accompanied by flashy red fireworks, followed the first one quickly. After a breath or two, all the high-altitude surveillance soul tools in a two-and-a-half kilometer radius were blown up by Elder Xuan's massive soul power.

After Elder Xuan did that, the rest started to act too. With their Transcendent Douluo strength, they did not need any flying-type soul tools to fly. The remaining seven all flew off in different directions.

After a short while, the pitch-black night sky started to light up again. A huge amount of aerial surveillance-type soul tools were destroyed at great speed.

However, the Sun Moon Empire was still the most powerful empire on the continent. It quickly reacted and counter-attacked!

Powerful rays of light lit up on the ground as soul tools bombarded the sky. They were all wide-barreled soul cannons, and there were also other soul cannons which could immobilize, paralyze, or stun their targets!

Only soul tools which were Class 6 and above could hit targets at their altitude. Instantly, the entire sky was illuminated by bright, eye-catching lights. The rays of light from the soul cannons were like a forest of death that enveloped everything!

Chapter 373.2: All Sides Making Their Moves

Faced with this formation, even a normal Titled Douluo would panic, and try to escape as quickly as he could. However, no matter how strong the Sun Moon Empire's defenses were, they were not designed to withstand Transcendent Douluo. Or at least, they were not prepared to handle eight of them!

Faced with the rapidly rising rays of light, Elder Xuan and the rest rose higher into the air. No one knew how many soul cannons the Sun Moon Empire had beneath them, so fighting them head-on was not a wise choice. However, no matter how powerful a soul cannon was, even if it was Class 9, its range was limited. With their Transcendent Douluo cultivation, they could fly three thousand meters into the air, a height which would allow them to dodge most soul tools.

The eight figures rose into the sky. Even if a soul cannon could strike them, it could not overcome their defenses. Without the help of the destroyed high-altitude surveillance soul tools, it would be difficult to lock onto their positions.

However, Elder Xuan and the others did not relax. They had seen the strength of the Sun Moon Empire's soul tools in battle, and understood how terrifying their opponents were. In Elder Xuan's heart, he rejoiced at the fact that Huo Yuhao had destroyed the underground bunker. At that time, he had scolded the young man because that action might have impoverished many. However, now that he thought about it, he realized that had the huge warehouse not been destroyed, all the soul tools inside of it would have been deployed in war.

Even Transcendent Douluo like them had to dodge to avoid getting hit by this many soul cannons. How would the soldiers of the three countries fare?

The high-altitude bombardment did not last for very long. After a few minutes, the strong light coming from the ground started to slowly fade. At the same time, ground-based aerial surveillance soul tools started to scan the air using huge swaths of shapeless light waves to find Elder Xuan and the others.

However, the range of these soul tools was only about a thousand meters. If not, there would be no need for those high-altitude surveillance soul tools. The Sun Moon Empire only possessed this level of technology at the moment.

After the ground-based aerial surveillance soul tools performed a scan, figures rose into the air and charged toward them in the sky.

All of these figures had a light on their backs, which came from flying-type soul tools. There were hundreds of them. One of them, in the center, carried a large surveillance soul tool.

Faced with a sudden attack, the Sun Moon Empire had come up with an all-around response. First, they bombarded their targets with all their might. Then, they used ground-based aerial surveillance soul tools to scan for them. Finally, they deployed their Aerial Warfare Legion.

Their plans were very well done.

However, their enemies today were nearly invincible. If the Sun Moon Empire's soul engineering legions were powerful enough to resist the rest of the world, the Sun Moon Empire would not have had to wait to invade the other empires, or form an alliance with evil soul masters.

Hence, when Elder Xuan appeared with a smile in front of the three hundred members of the Aerial Warfare Legion, their end was near.

Hundreds of soul cannons open up on Elder Xuan. In this legion, the most powerful soul engineer was at least Class 7.

However, faced with a powerful existence like a Rank 98 Titled Douluo, everything they did was futile.

Elder Xuan did not like killing, so he did not kill them straight away, but instead used his domain-type Gravity Control. All of the soldiers fell to the ground like flies that been doused with insecticide.

The other elders did not slack either. Discussion and action were separate matters.

Explosions rang out from the ground below. According to the unspoken rules of the continent, Titled Douluo and high-level soul engineers would not attack ordinary people. This was why Elder Song did not want to attack just now.

However, Elder Xuan had found a loophole. Their target was naturally not the ordinary soldiers of the Sun Moon Empire. However, faced with an attack by the aerial soul engineers, Elder Xuan naturally would not show mercy. The other elders did not kill, but instead tried to cause as much destruction as possible.

While the soul cannon bombardment just now was powerful, it also revealed the locations of the soul cannons the Sun Moon Empire had installed. Hence, they became targets for the many Transcendent Douluo. Beyond the sites of the soul cannons, they also attacked granaries and ammunition warehouses.

That night was a nightmare for the Sun Moon Empire's border troops stationed near the Heavenly Soul Empire.

Explosions boomed from midnight to dawn. When the sun rose once more, the main camp of the Sun Moon Empire was completely ruined.

How could there be no Class 9 soul engineers in charge of such an important camp? However, the two Class 9 soul engineers in charge there could do nothing in the face of eight Transcendent Douluo. Furthermore, the attack took place at night. Without the high-altitude surveillance soul tools, how could they concentrate their fire on the elders of the Sea God's Pavilion?

War had yet to break out, but Shrek Academy was already using its strength to demonstrate to the Sun Moon Empire that soul masters were still the most powerful weapons of war!

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Elder Xuan and the other elders did not hide their identities. Soon, news of this destruction spread throughout the Sun Moon Empire.

"Smash!" A delicate tea bottle was shattered against the ground.

Xu Tianran was so enraged that his face was pale. "What the hell were the border troops doing? Four hundred soul engineers are injured or dead. A huge amount of soul cannons and ammunition were lost. Fools, a bunch of fools!"

Ju Zi sat next to Xu Tianran, clad in light-golden regalia, and was silent.

After Xu Tianran ascended to the throne, he named her his empress. Her position was unlike before.

After Xu Tianran was done venting his anger, he calmed down, and a smile crept across the corner of his mouth as he said, "Shrek, have you finally decided to strike? Someone go and summon the Imperial Tutor to discuss this matter."

"Yes!" the guards outside replied frightfully.

"Empress, what do you think?" Xu Tianran asked Ju Zi.

Ju Zi stood up, walked behind Xu Tianran, and massaged his shoulders, saying, "Your Majesty, please don't be too angry. This matter, to me, appears strange. While Shrek Academy is the top school on the continent, they do not belong to any country. Everyone knows that Shrek Academy is independent, and their position is exceptional. This time, their actions should be a form of retaliation against us for capturing the participants of the tournament."

"They want to force me to release them?" Xu Tianran's eyes narrowed into slits.

Ju Zi nodded and said, "I believe that to be the case. They'll continue to attack. Faced with these powerful soul masters, it is indeed impossible to fight back. They rely on the border with the Heavenly Soul Empire and the Star Luo Empire, which makes it hard for us to strike back at them."

Xu Tianran chuckled coldly and said, "Do they want to see who is more destructive? In that case, no one can beat evil soul masters. Since they want to unleash destruction, I shall do it, too! Let's see who will crack first."

Ju Zi shook her head and said, "No, Your Majesty, you can't do that. We aren't ready yet. If we do that, we'll be provoking the war ahead of schedule. While the Holy Ghost Church is powerful, they cannot fight all the soul masters of the original three countries of the continent. This may be a trap set by our opponents. If the Holy Ghost Church suffers a major defeat, it will not do us any good."

Xu Tianran was ultimately a crafty leader. Just now, anger had made him lose his reason, but he gradually calmed down and patted Ju Zi's hand. "With you as my empress, I'm blessed indeed. Tell me, what should we do?"

A murderous aura flashed in her eyes as she said, "Your Majesty, our empire still has a stockpile of Class 9 stationary soul cannons. There are some that can shoot into the sky, right?"

Xu Tianran's eyes lit up as he said, "Are you saying we should intimidate them?"

"Yes! Kill one to scare a hundred. This will prevent them from being so arrogant. There are some soul masters who have yet to taste the might of a Class 9 stationary soul cannon."

A clear breeze intermingled with the aroma of nature. Insects and birds chirped in the forest, and sunlight cascaded down, casting faint rays that could not penetrate the thick foliage.

Underneath a tree so wide that it would require at least ten people to surround it, sat a person.

Her powdery-blue long hair hung loosely behind her back. As she was sitting down, her hair brushed the ground. Her eyes were shut, her long eyebrows curled slightly, and her nose was straight. Her skin was pale white, and her lips were supple. If 'beauty' had a human form, this was it.

Her long, slender legs were crossed as she sat straight. From the side, one could see her round, heaving posterior. Her slender figure, which stretched from her waist to her posterior, would attract the attention of any man.

Even though her eyes were closed, she emitted an icy-cold aura that deterred most beasts and men from approaching her. If one could sense the auras nearby, one would realize that apart from birds and insects, there were no large animals.

This was one of the most mysterious and dangerous places in the Douluo Continent. Soul masters called it the Slaughtering Grounds, as it was the core region of the Great Star Dou Forest. To humans, this was a deadly place. Even Transcendent Douluo would not dare to come to this place without preparation, because half of the Ten Great Savage Beasts of the Douluo Continent lived here. They each had extraordinary abilities, and were as intelligent as humans. Furthermore, they could also command the many powerful soul beasts inside the Great Star Dou Forest. ~~no~~ ~~ve~~ ~~(~~ ~~l~~ ~~b~~ ~~-~~ ~~In~~

Normally, a hundred-thousand year soul beast was equivalent to a Titled Douluo. In terms of strength, it depended on the innate skills of the individual soul beast, just like how it depended on the martial soul and soul skills of a Titled Douluo.

Chapter 373.3: All Sides Making Their Moves

Once a soul beast broke through its bottleneck and reached a two hundred-thousand year cultivation level, its power could rival that of a Transcendent Douluo.

Every one hundred thousand years after that would be a matter of life and death to the soul beast. Undoubtedly, every time the soul beast overcame such a deadly test, its power would increase exponentially.

It was like when Huo Yuhao first met the Ice Empress. The terrifying power of the Ice Empress was enough to fight a Rank 97 Titled Douluo. In the extreme north, even someone as powerful as Elder Xuan might not have been able to defeat her. Among the Ten Great Savage Beasts, however, the Ice Empress was only ranked seventh.

As for the Snow Empress, the reason why she started to regress and almost self-destructed inside Huo Yuhao was because her own power was way too strong.

After a soul beast broke through the five hundred-thousand year barrier, it would be as powerful as an Ultimate Douluo. In other words, the Snow Empress was as powerful as the Dragon Emperor Douluo, Long Xiaoyao. If he met her in the Extreme North, Long Xiaoyao would not dare to fight her head-on.

In the world of soul beasts, including the Snow Empress, five of the Ten Great Savage Beasts were as powerful as Ultimate Douluo. They all held powerful positions. Naturally, they were the top five of the Ten Great Savage Beasts.

At this moment, in the core region of the Great Star Dou Forest, the Slaughtering Grounds, lived the first, fourth, fifth, sixth, and eighth of the Ten Great Savage Beasts. They ruled over all the other soul beasts.

To live in the Slaughtering Grounds, one had to have a cultivation of at least one hundred thousand years. Hence, this was the top place for Transcendent Douluo to seek adventures.

Once one reached the level of a Transcendent Douluo, he would not need soul rings anymore. However, it was important to remember that the killing of a hundred-thousand year old soul beast would not only spawn a hundred thousand year soul ring, but more importantly, it would produce a soul bone... a hundred-thousand year soul bone which carried two soul skills!

For soul masters, gold and riches were nothing. However, how many people could possess all six soul bones? Once a Transcendent Douluo had a hundred-thousand year soul beast's soul bone, his power would experience a qualitative leap.

Hence, many Transcendent Douluo visited the Slaughtering Grounds. Some of them even killed a few hundred-thousand year soul beasts.

In the end, this enraged the leaders of the soul beasts in the Great Star Dou Forest. They launched an unprecedentedly terrifying beast wave, targeting Shrek City. It terrified all soul masters.

Even though Shrek City was able to halt the invading beast wave with the help of the many disciples from Shrek Academy, as well as the Body Sect, the humans eventually compromised.

Shrek Academy led a total of 27 Titled Douluo in promising, on behalf of all humans, that as long as a hundred-thousand year soul beast did not leave the Slaughtering Grounds, the humans would not enter it. Only then did the leaders of the soul beasts calm down and end their destructive beast wave, and the devastation it brought in its wake.

From that moment on, the Slaughtering Grounds in the Great Star Dou Forest became a forbidden zone for humans. Not a single human could be found there.

The beasts with more than a hundred-thousand year cultivation all fell into a deep slumber. They gathered their energy and prepared to break through their next calamity.

Under this backdrop, in the spiritual aura-filled Slaughter Grounds, sat a woman. How could this scene not be shocking? Could it mean that the promise between humans and beasts was broken?

Suddenly, the woman's body started to tremble slightly. Following that, a strange scene appeared. A golden light shone in the center of her forehead. This golden light extended into a ray of light about one inch long. The golden ray then split into two, and turned into a golden eye, which looked up into the endless night sky.

When the eye shone, everything around it seemed to lose its color. The chirping of birds and insects suddenly stopped. It was as if the eye was the only thing that was alive, and was judging everything before it.

The eye looked into the distance, and gradually started to ripple clearly, a wave of gentle golden light starting to spread from the girl's body.

Light flashed, and the girl started to move. She stood up, and the moment she did, her slim, slender body became even more alluring.

The golden eye on her forehead now closed, but her powdery-blue eyes, obscured slightly by her long lashes, opened instantly.

Her eyes seemed glazed as she mumbled to herself, "Why? Why can't I forget him? I control the power of destiny, but I can't control my own? What irony is this? His destiny, why will he...?"

At this moment, the dazed look in her eyes turned into panic. Her entire mental state appeared different as she emitted a completely different aura!

She started to pace up and down, and the aura from her body became increasingly unstable. Her petite face was panicky, then angry, then resolute, and then it softened. The constant changes in her facial expression reflected the turmoil in her heart.

Finally, she grit her teeth and looked at the thick canopy above her head. She took in a deep breath and said, "I'll go, I must go! I can't be clouded by destiny. I want to help him change his destiny, and mine too. I... I want to fight for this one chance!"

She stopped mumbling to herself. Suddenly, she jumped and pierced through the thick foliage like a golden cannon shell. She flew into the air, leaving only a lingering fragrance in the forest.

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Sunrise City...

With the continual development of soul tools, more and more lower-level soul tools started to enter the daily lives of the common folk of the Sun Moon Empire. Perhaps the Sun Moon Empire's higher-level soul engineers could not rival the soul masters from the original three countries of the Douluo Continent, but it had more low-level soul masters. This was a result of their advances in soul engineering.

On the Douluo Continent, everyone could Awaken their martial soul at the age of six. Regardless of what their martial soul was, they could all cultivate.

However, those who could truly make a name for themselves in the soul master world could not just rely on cultivation.

For many of them, even after they had awakened their martial soul, their soul power would only be between Rank 1 and Rank 3. This was a huge limitation on their future cultivation, which was not just limited to the first ten ranks. If they were not innately talented, they would get very little in return for their effort.

In particular, if their martial soul had no practical use, such as those which were hoes, cups, or plates, there was no need for them to continue cultivating.

Because of this, many of those who were not gifted in this aspect had no way of continuing their cultivation. Their lack of innate talent prevented them from receiving an education from an excellent academy, and often they could not afford the exorbitant fees of a soul master school. Very few were like Huo Yuhao, who was able to use make up for his lack of innate talent with hard work.

However, the situation over in the Sun Moon Empire was different. A few hundred years ago, with the development of soul engineering, this situation was greatly ameliorated. In the Sun Moon Empire, the Awakening of one's martial soul would also mean that as long as one had soul power, he or she would qualify for free training subsidized by the empire. They would even be given medicines that could

increase their soul power. While these medicines might have side-effects, it was glorious to become a soul master! Being a soul master meant that one was superior to his peers! Who would give up such a chance?

So what if your martial soul was useless? As long as you had soul power, you could use soul tools. With soul tools, it would not be hard to attack or defend yourself!

Perhaps it was a result of the medicines, but soul masters without innate talent could possess only two or three rings at most. However, as the numbers of this group of people grew, the overall situation changed.

Their existence was a strong foundation upon which the Sun Moon Empire built its soul engineer legions. At the same time, they allowed for more civilian soul tools to be used by the ordinary citizens of the Sun Moon Empire.

How was the Sun Moon Empire able to resist the three empires of the Douluo Continent? This was one of the major reasons!

Undoubtedly, in terms of soul engineering technology and the nurturing of soul engineers, the Sun Moon Empire had a very large lead.

Sunrise City was only a small-to-medium sized city in the Sun Moon Empire. It was not as huge as Radiant City, and in total, it had fewer than a hundred thousand permanent residents. Counting its non-permanent residents, it had about half a million inhabitants at any given time.

However, in the past few months, the city had undergone a complete change. Its fifteen-meter-tall city walls were now filled with a huge amount of searchlights and various surveillance tools. Outside Sunrise City were two soul engineering legions, each of which had five hundred men.

In the Sun Moon Empire, soul engineer legions were ranked differently. The most powerful one was the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineering Legion, which was the most powerful force in the empire. One's soul power had to be at least Rank 50 to join it. In other words, only Soul Kings were qualified to enter it. In total, it had three hundred men. Among them were three legion commanders and three legion vice-commanders, all of whom were Class 9 soul engineers who were loyal only to the imperial family.

Only the Emperor of the Sun Moon Empire could use this powerful soul engineering legion. They were equipped with the top soul tools, and they received the best treatment among all the soldiers in the Sun Moon Empire. The upkeep for this one legion was equivalent to the tax revenue of two big cities.

This was the force which guarded Radiant City, and they were the most loyal and important fighting force of the emperor. Together with the Imperial Palace of Consecration, they were the two pillars of the monarchy.

Chapter 374.1: Hand that Protects the Nation

When these two forces worked together, even a powerful entity like the Holy Ghost Church had to be wary, much less an ordinary person.

Other than the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineer Legion, the empire also had four other Beast Lord-ranked soul engineer legions. They were the Imperial Dragon Soul Engineer Legion, the Terrorclaw Soul Engineer Legion, the Fire Phoenix Soul Engineer Legion, and the Evileye Tyrant Soul Engineer Legion.

These four soul engineering legions were all named after powerful kings among soul beasts. Among them, 'Imperial Dragon' referred to the Purplebrilliant Heaven Destroying Dragon. This was a powerful but extinct soul beast. In the Sun Moon Empire's imperial family, some of its scions possessed this powerful bloodline martial soul. One of the main reasons that Xu Tianran was able to ascend to the throne was that he inherited this martial soul, unlike the Sun that the other descendants of the Imperial Family possessed. His Purplebrilliant Heaven Destroying Dragon and the Earth Dragon Sect's bloodline martial soul, Ruby Dragons, were similar in some aspects, but they were also distinctly different from one another.

The element of the Ruby Dragons was Annihilation, while the element of the Purplebrilliant Heaven Destroying Dragons was Catastrophe, which was more tyrannical than the Ruby Dragons' Annihilation. Legend had it that the Purplebrilliant Heaven Destroying Dragons' ancestor was a Second Dragon which had accompanied the Dragon God, and was also known as the Ancestor of the Second Dragons. However, as it was too destructive, it was personally destroyed by the Dragon God.

The Terrorclaw Soul Engineer Legion was naturally named after the Darkgolden Terrorclaw Bear. This terrifying beast was legendary in all countries.

The Fire Phoenix Soul Engineer Legion took its name from the mythical Fire Phoenix. It only recruited female soul engineers, and its current leader was the Empress of the Sun Moon Empire, Ju Zi.

The last legion, the Evileye Tyrant Soul Engineer Legion, was named after the only one of the Ten Great Savage Beasts that lived in the Sun Moon Empire's borders, the Evileye Tyrant King. This beast was ranked second among the Ten Great Savage Beasts, and was infamous throughout the entire Sun Moon Continent. It had hidden itself, and no one knew if it was alive or dead. However, since the Sun Moon Empire decided to name an entire legion after it because of its ferocity, one could tell how fearsome it was.

There was a legend surrounding the Evileye Tyrant King. When the Sun Moon Continent first crashed into the Douluo Continent, the Evileye Tyrant King once went to the Great Star Dou Forest to find the Beast God, Di Tian.

No one knew what happened between the Evileye Tyrant King and the Beast God, but when the former returned to the Sun Moon Empire, it vanished without a trace.

Di Tian was still the Beast God, and was still ranked first among the Ten Great Savage Beasts. However, after that battle, the Evileye Tyrant King was able to retreat in one piece from the Great Star Dou Forest, establishing its title as the second-most powerful beast among the Ten Great Savage Beasts.

The four soul engineer legions each had their specialties. For example, the Fire Phoenix Soul Engineer Legion was all-female. The Terrorclaw Soul Engineer Legion was filled with buff men, the Imperial Dragon Soul Engineer Legion was the best at fighting, and the Evileye Tyrant Soul Engineer Legion specialized in speed.

To join any of them, one's soul power had to be at least Rank 40, which was the equivalent of a Soul Ancestor. Each Beast Lord-ranked soul engineer legion had three hundred members. Other than Ju Zi, who led the Fire Phoenix Soul Engineer Legion, the other legion commanders were all Class 9 soul engineers. The vice-legion commander of the Fire Phoenix Soul Engineer Legion was a Class 9 soul engineer, too.

Together with the Sun Moon Imperial Soul Engineer Legion, they were collectively known as the Hand that Protects the Nation. They were the five pillars which supported the Sun Moon Empire.

Other than these five soul engineer legions, the other soul engineer legions had lower entry requirements. They were comprised of five hundred men each, and as long as one had more than two soul rings, one could join. Right now, there were six of these legions, totaling three thousand men, all stationed in different locations.

Other than them, the major regional armies of the Sun Moon Empire each recruited legions of soul engineers, too. However, their organization was not standardized, and even the imperial family could not control all of them. Many of them belonged to the nobility, like the rebellious ones Huo Yuhao and the others had met earlier on.

On the battlefield, even a low-level soul engineer legion was stronger than a cavalry legion of ten thousand men. They were highly destructive, and because they were few in number, they could use their soul tools very flexibly. Normally, a single soul engineer legion could decide the outcome of a battle.

The five major soul engineer legions could also turn into aerial soul engineers. Their many years of training allowed them to work together seamlessly, and their morale was strong. Commanded by top soul engineers, they would be the backbone of the Sun Moon Empire's future conquests.

Around Sunrise City, which seemed plain and ordinary, the Sun Moon Empire had stationed two of the six soul engineer legions, each of which comprised five hundred men. This was a testament to the importance of Sunrise City to the Sun Moon Empire. Furthermore, this was just its outer city defenses!

Huo Yuhao and his companions had reached the outskirts of Sunrise City one day ago, but they were in no rush to enter it. Instead, they intermingled with a trade delegation, and stayed outside the city for a day.

With Huo Yuhao present, it was akin to having a highly-effective surveillance soul tool. Despite the Sun Moon Empire's technological prowess, no soul tool could rival Huo Yuhao's Spiritual Detection when it came to surveillance!

After his closed-door cultivation, Huo Yuhao had merged all his skills together. He had also obtained a deeper understanding of his concrete-material realm spiritual power.

Right now, he was scanning the entire area. He was able to detect anything within a fifteen-hundred meter radius. If he concentrated his spiritual power in a particular direction, he would be able to sense everything there, be it the differences in obstacles, terrain, or the weather, up to a distance of five to seven thousand meters.

This was without using his Eye of Destiny!

After a night's rest, Huo Yuhao was able to gather enough intelligence. He was well aware that there were powerful people guarding the captured soul masters. To avoid startling them, he did not try to survey inside the city.

There were many different types of martial souls, and each day brought new changes to the development of soul engineering. He could not be sure that no one from the Sun Moon Empire would be able to sense the presence of his spiritual power, and so he acted very cautiously. If they failed this time, their chances of success next time would be even tinier.

There were only seven of them there. It was impossible to win based on brute force alone. Hence, they had to depend on the opportunity Shrek Academy created for them, as well as their own wits.

After a night's worth of detection, Huo Yuhao discovered that the two soul engineer legions of five hundred men were divided into ten groups. These were stationed at various locations outside Sunrise City.

Sunrise City was surrounded by open plains. All one thousand soul engineers had taken up positions in the plains. Soul cannons, which were weak individually, were deployed in huge quantities around the city. There were also some high-level soul tools nearby. One could say that Sunrise City, in its current state, was akin to a city of under threat of death. If the army of soul engineers wished, they could level the city in a very short time.

They were not the problematic ones, though. Those were the many surveillance soul tools on the walls of Sunrise City. After one scan, Huo Yuhao found out that they comprised long-range all-terrain soul detectors, short-range thermal detectors, medium-range aerial soul detectors, triggered targeting-type soul tools, and a huge amount of high-altitude surveillance soul tools.

One could say that even if a fly flew out from Sunrise City, the soul engineers in charge of these surveillance soul tools would be able to detect it.

Huo Yuhao could conceal himself with Imitation, and he could use his Ultimate Ice to prevent his body heat from being picked up by the short-range thermal detectors. However, that was all he could do. There was nothing he could do against the triggered targeting-type soul tools!

That type of soul tool sensed the fluctuations of one's soul power. When he used his Imitation and Ultimate Ice, his soul power would definitely fluctuate. At that moment, if his foes were locked onto his location, Huo Yuhao would be bombarded by every single soul engineer stationed outside. This was akin to being carpet-bombed. With the high density of soul engineers nearby, there was no way he could escape.

"Yuhao, what can we do?" After breakfast, the Tang Sect discussed this issue in hushed voices.

At this moment, a long line had already formed outside Sunrise City. Right now, anyone entering or leaving Sunrise City would be searched and screened. This was why there were trade delegations stationed outside the city. Searching one such delegation would require a whole day, or even more.

Huo Yuhao and the rest were able to blend in with these trade delegations. As there were many traders, no one had noticed them.

Huo Yuhao said, "I've scanned this place carefully. It's impossible to sneak inside, as there are too many surveillance soul tools. Almost every type of surveillance soul tool is present. It'll be troublesome to go in via the city gate, as they have soul power detectors which can sense the fluctuations in our soul power. They can then determine our strength based on our soul power fluctuations." n-(OveL3B1n

Xu Sanshi frowned and said, "It's already been a few months, and yet they're still so vigilant. We can't even enter the city like this. How can we save them? Furthermore, they captured over six hundred people. Even if we do enter, can we save them all? Escape will be difficult too, with so many soul engineers both in and around the city. Can we even escape?"

Huo Yuhao said, "It's difficult indeed, but there's still a chance. We need to react accordingly."

"We'll go in swords waving," Ji Juechen said coolly.

Xu Sanshi waved at him and said, "Bye bye!"

Chapter 374.2: Hand that Protects the Nation

Ji Juechen leered at him, but did not make a move. He was a sword fanatic, not a fool.

Nan Qiuqiu was the most anxious at the moment. She knew that her mother was imprisoned inside the city, but she could not enter it to save her. It would take a miracle to calm her down. Right now, she was like an ant on a frying pan. If not for Ye Guyi's consolation, she might actually have tried to fight her way inside.

Xu Sanshi looked at Huo Yuhao, who was in deep thought, and said, "Yuhao, you have a plan, right?"

Huo Yuhao said, "There's no chance, so we have to make a chance. The Academy has already attacked, but the news has yet to reach this city. The Heavenly Soul Empire and the Star Luo Empire will respond accordingly. The palace will know of this as soon as possible. With the tense situation at the border, the Sun Moon Empire has a few choices. First, they can take the prisoners here to the frontline as hostages. Second, if they are cruel, they'll kill them straight away. Third, they can station more soldiers and soul engineer legions at the border.

"I feel that the first and third options are the most possible ones. After all, the Sun Moon Empire's war preparations are not yet finished. If not, they would have already killed all the people they have imprisoned. We have to enter before news of the attack reaches here and find opportunities to strike. What we aim to do is not to rescue them, but to help them regain their fighting abilities. As long as we're able to do so, we'll stand a much better chance."

Xu Sanshi nodded and said, "Right, but how can we get in?"

Huo Yuhao smiled slightly and said, "Let me think. If we can't even enter the gate, we would have wasted all our Ultimate Soldier training, right? You lot follow the trade delegation into the city, and I'll strike when they start searching you. At that time, the soldiers can only respond in one way, and that will be to stop the search and close the gates. Then, you guys can..."

As he spoke, Huo Yuhao muttered a few quiet words into everyone's ears. They all nodded in agreement.

“If our plan fails or we’re exposed, it’ll all depend on you to save the day, second senior brother,” Huo Yuhao said to He Caitou.

“Okay, that’s fine with me. However, how do you plan to enter the city, little junior brother?” He Caitou inquired.

A light shone in Huo Yuhao’s eyes as he replied, “Don’t worry, I have my ways. I’ll go first. Be careful, everyone.”

With that, he turned to leave. Mingling with the trade delegation, he disappeared without a trace.

The others also intermingled with the trade delegation and sauntered slowly toward the city gate as they prepared for inspection.

Right now, everyone from the Tang Sect was in disguise. For example, He Caitou now had hair on his head, Xu Sanshi had a scar on his face, and Ye Guyi and Nan Qiuqiu were disguised as villagers, a far cry from their usual beautiful selves.

The line moved forward slowly. It was almost noon at this point, and many in the queue were consuming their rations. Under Huo Yuhao’s instructions, those from the Tang Sect were in no rush. They followed the others patiently.

At this moment, a group of soldiers on horseback dashed toward them from afar. Sand and dust flew into the air, and the traders who were in the queue had no choice but to dodge them. It was a chaotic scene.

Xu Sanshi and He Caitou exchanged a look. The two of them had the same thought. “Maybe news from the border has finally reached them? However, what will its impact be? This depends on the amount of pressure Elder Xuan is exerting at the border.”

After another two hours, it was finally the Tang Sect’s turn. Among the six of them, Ye Guyi and Nan Qiuqiu stood at the front.

At this moment, the two women were dressed as if they had come from the countryside. Nan Qiuqiu’s dress was gray and very plain. Her clear face was dotted with freckles, and she looked very pitiable and moving. Ye Guyi was slightly taller than her, but Huo Yuhao made her look pitiful too. The two women walked side-by-side. Their simple, rural-looking outfits and their pitiful demeanor complemented their overall look.

“The two of you, come over here,” said a soldier who was stationed outside the gates, waving at them.

Nan Qiuqiu and Ye Guyi each had a basket. When they heard his words, they walked over immediately. At that moment, the two of them could not help but feel nervous. The soldiers were nothing, but there were so many surveillance soul tools around them, and two soul engineer legions outside the city. This was too much of a threat to them!

Nan Qiuqiu swore in her heart, “Where is that bastard Huo Yuhao? It’s almost our turn!”

There was a huge soul power detector at the gate. With just one scan, it would detect the presence and fluctuations of one’s soul power.

“Brother, will this hurt us?” Nan Qiuqiu asked the soldier timidly.

The gate was manned by a small team of twenty soldiers. They were split into two shifts, and the team leader was the one who spoke to Nan Qiuqiu and Ye Guyi. He was armored, and a longsword dangled by his side. He looked cool and impressive, but he was ultimately still a hot-headed young man. At his age, he was naturally hormonally-charged. When he saw the pretty Nan Qiuqiu, his hard expression softened visibly.

“It’s fine. You’ll just be scanned by the soul power detector. It won’t hurt you at all. Just maintain this position, go on!”

“Thank you so much, brother! You’re so handsome,” said Nan Qiuqiu. She said the last bit softly as she turned to look at him, batting her eyelashes.

The small team leader’s heart skipped a beat as he asked, “Where are you from, sister? You’re pretty too.”

Nan Qiuqiu said shyly, “I’m from Radiant City. I live in its outskirts. Normally, I’ll help my family in the fields and with the chores. I don’t remember Sunrise City’s security being so tight. What happened?”

The small team leader looked at Nan Qiuqiu staring at him in pure admiration, and could not help but feel pleased with himself as he said, “There were some incidents in the city, so things are a lot more troublesome right now. It’s fine. I’ll order my men to move faster. You can go in as a group.”

“Wow brother, you’re an official? No wonder you look so special,” Ye Guyi interjected from the side.

The small team leader smiled and said, “I’m just a low-ranked one. Go, go, are the two of you sisters?”

Nan Qiuqiu nodded and said, “That’s right! She’s my cousin. There’re six of us, as we wouldn’t dare to travel by ourselves! Those three over there are my uncles, and that’s my aunt.” As she spoke, she pointed at Xu Sanshi, He Caitou, Ji Juechen, and Jing Ziyang.

“There are six of you, right? Go and get checked together. I’ll tell them to be faster. We’re all trying to make a living. No one has it easy,” said the small team leader. Evidently, he was giddy from Nan Qiuqiu and Ye Guyi’s praises and admiration. Instantly, he became much more magnanimous.

Nan Qiuqiu’s beautiful eyes shone and she said, “Brother, you’re so nice. Are... are you married?” When she said the last bit, it was barely louder than a whisper. However, the team leader heard it.

“Married? I’m a poor soldier. Who would want me?” the team leader chuckled.

Nan Qiuqiu said in a rush, “Don’t say that! Brother, you are so manly! How can someone not like you? I shan’t talk anymore, as I’m in a rush. Here, take this...” As she spoke, she took out a coarse piece of paper and a pencil from her basket. She wrote a few, messy words on it before handing it over to the team leader.

Faced with Nan Qiuqiu’s watery gaze, the team leader’s heart beat even faster. He took the paper from her. There was an address on it.

“Sister, you are...”

Nan Qiuqiu blushed as she said softly, "Moron." With that, she walked elegantly over to the soul power detector.

The small team leader felt his throat tighten as he swallowed to himself. Many different expressions flitted across his face. No matter how dumb he was, he understood exactly what was going on at that moment. He could not wait for his shift to end so that he could bring Nan Qiuqiu and the rest of them straight into Sunrise City.

Xu Sanshi, He Caitou, Ji Juechen, and Jing Ziyang followed the two women as they walked toward the soul power detector. n/-0velb1n

Nan Qiuqiu only did so after she received instructions from afar via Huo Yuhao's spiritual power. If not, she would have exchanged a few more words with the team leader.

Just when Nan Qiuqiu was five meters away from the soul power detector, a series of explosions could be heard in the distance.

This caught the attention of both the trade delegations and the soldiers. Every single one of them looked in the direction of the sounds.

In the nearby plains, one could see huge swathes of light flashing. The light shone in the shrubs and forests. No one could see what was causing it, but it made a huge ruckus.

The small team leader, who was previously infatuated with Nan Qiuqiu, stood dazed for a few moments before he snapped to attention and shouted, "Quick, come in! Close the gates! There's an attack!"

As he said that, he raced toward the gates.

"Brother, brother, what's going on? I'm so scared," Nan Qiuqiu said faintly. At this moment, both Ye Guyi and she were trembling non-stop.

"It's no big deal. Quick, enter the city with me. We have to close the gate soon. I don't know what's going on," the said team leader without thinking. As he spoke, he gestured to his subordinates to bring the soul power detector into the city.

A joyous look flashed in Nan Qiuqiu's eyes. The six from the Tang Sect rushed into the city with the soldiers.

When the gates closed, Xu Sanshi, He Caitou, Ji Juechen, and Jing Ziyang quickly slipped away into the city. Nan Qiuqiu and Ye Guyi, however, were in no rush to leave.

Chapter 374.3: Hand that Protects the Nation

"That was so scary. Brother, do we still need to be searched?" Nan Qiuqiu cried out to the small team leader, whose face was grim as he prepared to ascend the city walls.

The team leader waved at her and said, "Enter the city, quickly. We'll have time for it later..." As he said that, he waved the piece of coarse paper he held in his hands.

Nan Qiuqiu smiled and batted her eyelashes at him once more. Only then did she enter the city with Ye Guyi. n/.Ovelb1n

At this moment, no matter how lovesick the team leader was, he did not dare to abandon his post.

The six of them from the Tang Sect were able to enter the city just like that without having to be checked.

They quickly re-grouped.

Xu Sanshi gave Nan Qiuqiu a thumbs-up as he said, "Qiuqiu, you were excellent! I didn't know you were such a good actor. He was not the only one who fell for it. Even I fell head-over-heels for you! Haha!"

Nan Qiuqiu said unkindly, "Spare me your crap, or else I'll complain about you to Sister Nannan. Your words are honeyed, indeed. We got in not because of my acting skills, but rather because of Huo Yuhao's accurate character judgment."

Ye Guyi nodded and said, "Qiuqiu is right. While his plan sounded dangerous, it was actually pretty risk-free."

He Caitou said, "We did not have to wait for nothing in the past two months. Had we mounted our rescue attempt immediately after they locked up the prisoners, security would have been much tighter, and we would not have been given such an opportunity. Let's go and find a place to rest. We'll wait for Yuhao to enter."

Outside the city...

The series of explosions were naturally caused by Huo Yuhao. As for himself, he had escaped the scene of the explosion long ago.

The origin of these explosions was the Infernal Gate

Huo Yuhao would not use Necromancy in front of his companions, especially not in front of Ye Guyi and her Holy Angel. However, this did not mean that he would not use it.

His closed-door training for the past few months had benefited him greatly. One could say that he was able to fully master all of the various odd abilities he had learned during the past seven-plus years of training and cultivation. His skills had reached a new level.

At the same time, he became more mature and stable. He was finally able to overcome some of his mental barriers.

With a simple necromantic spell, he summoned a group of skeletal soldiers and jiangshi, which charged fearlessly toward the positions of the two soul engineer legions. One could imagine the result. In less than ten seconds after the appearance of these undead creatures, they were detected by the high-altitude surveillance soul tool. They were then bombarded mercilessly by the soul engineer legions.

After fifteen seconds of non-stop bombardment, the entire area where the Gate of Hell was located looked as if it had been trampled flat by a herd of wild animals. Every blade of grass was obliterated.

What about Huo Yuhao? He had disguised himself with Imitation after he unleashed his Gate of Hell. Then, he rejoined the trade delegations in the queue.

Like them, he could not enter the city after the gates closed. No one knew when would the gates open once more. The sudden appearance of undead creatures would surely be investigated. However, it was likely that the investigation would yield no result.

Huo Yuhao knew that after the investigation revealed nothing, the gates would open once more.

Huo Yuhao followed his companions with Spiritual Detection. At this moment, he sensed that they were inside the city.

Now that's everyone's in, it's easier for me.

Huo Yuhao smiled slightly as he looked at the giant soul power detector on the city wall. A cold smile crept across his face. Do they think they really can stop me with those tools?

He observed his surroundings. The traders were complaining. He quietly left the trade delegation and sat down somewhere with shade.

Many people from the trade delegations did the same. Since they could not enter the city, they took the time to rest. His actions were not suspicious at all.

However, even though he was sitting down, he was extremely busy. His eyes were closed, and soul power flowed slowly through his body. His entire person entered a strange state.

He unleashed his gentle spiritual power as it carefully wrapped itself around the soul power in his body. Then, he quieted down the soul power in his body completely.

Normally, the soul power in a soul master's body would circulate continuously during one's daily cultivation, forming a cycle. It was nearly impossible to stop that, but Huo Yuhao was able to do so.

This method allowed him to seal his soul power with his spiritual power. This entire process took an hour. Only then was he able to prevent even the slightest hint of soul power from seeping out of his body. He temporarily became an ordinary person with extraordinary spiritual power.

After he did this, Huo Yuhao slowly stood up as he felt his body adjust to its new state.

When a soul master lost his soul power, he would definitely feel weak. However, he did not care too much about that. His walking pace had also slowed visibly.

He checked the state of his body, and ascertained that his soul power had been completely compressed by his spiritual power and sealed in the corners of his dantian. Only then did Huo Yuhao rejoin the trade delegations. This time, he took advantage of their belief that the city gates would not re-open so quickly and quietly slipped to the front of the queue.

The soul engineer legions did not take long to complete their checks. After an hour, they sent word to the city, and the gates of Sunrise City opened once again. The inspections of the trade delegations continued.

After fifteen minutes, Huo Yuhao stood in front of the soul power detector.

The gentle green light swept over his body. To be fair, Huo Yuhao was quite nervous too. However, he had a backup plan. If his identity was exposed here, there was no way the soul engineer legions in the

distance could strike him, as there were many civilians and traders around. With his power, he could charge into the city if he really needed to. Even if they searched the entire city, he was confident of escaping detection with all his various abilities.

The soldiers looked at the soul power detector and then at Huo Yuhao, who was disguised as a laborer for one of the trade delegations. He waved his hand, indicating to Huo Yuhao that he could enter.

Huo Yuhao sighed in relief. He was happy that his plan had worked. In other words, by suppressing his soul power with his spiritual power, he had now learned that he would be able to fool a soul power detector.

There were two types of soul power detectors. The first type would detect its target's internal soul power, and the other would try and sense if its target was releasing soul power. The soul power detector on the city wall belonged to the second type. The combination of both soul tools would be ideal in rooting out soul masters, as it could detect soul masters who were concealing themselves and those who were pretending to be ordinary people. At this moment, Huo Yuhao was able to use his immense spiritual power to elude detection and enter the city.

After he entered the gates, Huo Yuhao walked at a reasonable pace toward the inner part of the city.

This was indeed a medium-sized city. The Sun Moon Empire's cities were visibly different than those of the Star Luo Empire and the Heavenly Soul Empire. Even if the buildings were not particularly big, they were much bigger than the buildings in the original three countries of the Douluo Continent. Many of them had pointed roofs, too.

Huo Yuhao naturally did not pay attention to these, but instead was looking at the defenses inside the city. What shocked him most was that even as he moved forward, he could not detect any powerful auras inside the city. The city gates had many soul engineers manning and observing the surveillance soul tools, but none of them were particularly powerful. The people on the streets walked about as they carried on with their daily lives, no different from the citizens of any other city.

As Sunrise City's defenses were tight, all Shrek Academy knew was that the prisoners were kept here. They did not know where they were held specifically, or if there were any powerful people guarding them.

As a result, this operation was very difficult for the Tang Sect. Of course, Shrek Academy had created some opportunities for them.

First of all, they were given time. They were in no rush to enter the city. As long as full-scale war did not break out, they still had a chance to rescue the captives. This time, Elder Xuan and the rest were well-prepared when they caused the border commotion. The eight Transcendent Douluo wreaked havoc near the border with tacit cooperation from the Star Luo Empire and the Heavenly Soul Empire. This caused quite a bit of trouble for the Sun Moon Empire. For now, they would devote all their attention to the border.

Thus, Huo Yuhao's objectives were to first ascertain the location where the captives were kept, the strength of their guards, and the regional defenses of Sunrise City. This intelligence was more important than the rescue mission. Elder Xuan had told Huo Yuhao before he left that his priority was

reconnaissance. If they had a chance to save the captives, it would be great. If not, they should not take risks.

Huo Yuhao soon discovered the marks left by his companions. However, he did not rush to meet them, but instead strolled leisurely through Sunrise City.

He was dressed like a laborer. While he was tall for his age, his clothes were rough. His face and hairstyle were ordinary, and no one would notice him.

As Huo Yuhao walked, he slowly released the suppression his spiritual power exerted on his soul power.

How could it be easy to seal one's soul power with one's spiritual power? The feeling of a loss in power was horrid. Releasing the seal was troublesome, too. He could not release all of his compressed soul power at once. If he did let it burst forth, his passageways would be severely affected by the sudden outburst. All he could do was slowly release the seal, allow his soul power to seep out slowly, and circulate through his body once more.

Huo Yuhao was in no rush. As he walked, he observed his surroundings. With his spiritual power, he was able to notice details most ordinary people could not even without using Spiritual Detection. He memorized the areas he walked through so any subsequent operations would be easier.

He walked for two hours, and the sky started to dim. By then, he had released all his soul power and was back at his prime.

?Chapter 375.1: Sunrise City

Those who had bought the map of Sunrise City didn't know that the Sunmoon Empire had set a trap. It was necessary to proceed with caution.

Based on his own senses and observation of the flow of people around him, Huo Yuhao believed that he had entered a central region of Sunrise City. He stopped conserving his spiritual power as he reached this region. He activated his Spiritual Detection and focused his spiritual power to scan in a certain direction.

Wherever his spiritual power passed, everything that he surveyed was presented in his mind as a three-dimensional construct. As there were many buildings in the city to obstruct his detection, he couldn't detect as far as he could in an uncluttered area. However, the findings that he obtained were sufficient for him. n-)Ove**l**1n

He started thinking, his spiritual sea undulating tremendously. He slowly made a full turn and quickly scanned in one direction.

Sunrise City only stretched slightly more than twenty kilometers across. With Huo Yuhao's spiritual power and the Eye of Destiny, he could almost scan the entire city if he stood in the center of it.

It was just that he couldn't actually do this, as it would be too dangerous. His Eye of Destiny was too attention-catching. Even as he observed his surroundings, he conserved some of his spiritual power. Although his ability was unidirectional, he restricted the distance of his detection to a radius of two kilometers. In that way, he could still capture everything that was within the core region of Sunrise City.

Even a Titled Douluo couldn't do something like this. There were no surveillance soul tools that could carry out such an all-around inspection, either.

After Huo Yuhao completed his turn, there was a surprised look in his eyes. However, he soon returned to normal, and walked in the direction of the marks left behind by his teammates.

The Tang Sect had decided to put up at a medium-sized hotel. Before they set off, they had already put on their disguises. Of course, the hotel that they were staying in was naturally not at the address that Nan Qiuqiu had left for that small team leader.

Xu Sanshi was sitting in the main hall of the hotel, drinking cheap beer as he waited for Huo Yuhao. After seeing him enter the hotel, he immediately waved Yuhao over.

Huo Yuhao walked over to Xu Sanshi's side and sat down. He also ordered a pint of beer.

"Why took you so long? Are you okay?"

Huo Yuhao smiled and replied, "I'm fine. Has everyone settled down?"

Xu Sanshi nodded. "Things are fine. Have they revealed anything?"

Huo Yuhao replied, "A few things. I haven't found where they are keeping the hostages. However, there are a few high-class soul tools installed in the center of the city. The majority of them are stationary soul tools."

Huo Yuhao had discovered many things as he observed the city. He had discovered more than thirty residential houses were equipped with advanced soul tools. They were at least Class 6 soul tools, and there were even a few that were Class 7 and Class 8. There were some that he felt were very dangerous, especially those that he had never seen before. It was even possible that they were Class 9 soul tools.

How could Huo Yuhao not be shocked given such a situation?

Sunrise City was under complete surveillance right now. Undoubtedly, there were many surveillance soul tools above the city. Once something was found to be amiss, signals could be transmitted to the ground immediately. The advanced soul tools that were hidden in the city could then immediately seek out their targets. If there wasn't any emphasis on preventing civilian casualties, those who were discovered were almost certainly doomed. In addition, there were still the two soul engineer legions outside the city!

Xu Sanshi furrowed his brow and asked, "What about underground? What did you find out?"

Huo Yuhao replied, "There's nothing underground. My Spiritual Detection is greatly affected once I try to use it underground. It can only extend fifty meters underground. Even if I use my Eye of Destiny, it can only increase the range to a hundred meters. I need to be directly above in order to get a clearer picture.

"I haven't surveyed the entire city yet, but I think that the hostages are likely to be locked underground. As long as it's deep enough, and the number of entrances and exits are restricted, it'll be very difficult to breach. They'll be much more secure than if they were above ground. Considering how the Sun Moon Empire likes to construct all types of structures underground, that is the likeliest possibility. However, they took very strict defensive measures this time. After I entered the city, I discovered that there were

many pipes connected underground at the edges of the city walls. There are people watching these pipes, which are used to listen for any underground movement. As for any other measures, I haven't discovered them yet."

Xu Sanshi nodded and said, "It's already not easy to discover all this. Don't be too harsh on yourself, take your time. After all, we've just arrived. Go back and rest. We still need to continue tomorrow."

"Okay." Huo Yuhao followed Xu Sanshi back to their rooms. There were four guys and three ladies among the seven of them. The three ladies shared one room, while the four guys were split between two rooms. Huo Yuhao stayed with Ji Juechen, since He Caitou and Xu Sanshi were unwilling to room with him!

"Brother Ji." After he entered, Huo Yuhao immediately saw Ji Juechen sitting on a bed. He sounded very annoyed at this point.

The moment he entered, a sharp sword intent quickly greeted him. The room was dimly lit, but two bolts of electricity immediately flashed as Ji Juechen opened his eyes.

However, his sword intent was like ice in the face of boiling water, it was immediately dispelled. Furthermore, it didn't even cause Huo Yuhao any problems.

Ji Juechen was stunned. "I didn't realize you were already so strong. What's your cultivation like now?"

Huo Yuhao smiled slightly and replied, "You seem to only say those words when you are concerned about your opponents' abilities."

"When can we start fighting?"

Huo Yuhao twisted his lips and said, "It won't be soon. The enemies we are facing are unprecedentedly strong. We were sent over this time because the strong soul masters from the Academy are certainly being watched. The Tang Sect is less of a target. In addition, the Sun Moon Empire won't expect people of our cultivations to save the hostages. We'll likely only make our move after I find out what the situation in Sunrise City is like. However, it's more important to outsmart our enemies."

"Okay." Ji Juechen acknowledged his words before shutting his eyes and meditating again.

Huo Yuhao was a little annoyed as he shook his head. He felt that his words were falling on deaf ears.

He didn't eat in the hotel, either. After eating some dry rations, he sat cross-legged on a bed opposite Ji Juechen.

He didn't enter a deep meditative state. Right now, he was wracking his brain.

After his observation today, it seemed his hypothesis about the arrangement of soul tools and soul engineer legions was pretty accurate. The city was covered both inside and outside, and there were both ground-based and aerial soul tools. The entire city was covered. However, Huo Yuhao still felt that this wasn't the full strength in Sunrise City.

The city seemed to be very strong, and they even had Class 9 soul tools to hold the fort. However, could they really hold off the other three empires on the continent with two soul engineer legions?

If the three empires risked everything, they could mobilize more than fifty Titled Douluo. With such strength, it was unlikely that the Sun Moon Empire's soul engineer legions could resist them.

No one from the Holy Ghost Church is here? Impossible, they must be involved!

Huo Yuhao understood evil soul masters by now. The cultivation methods of evil soul masters were different. Usually, they involved the sacrifice of living spirits, which was also the reason why they were known as evil soul masters. As for these hostages who were held captive, they were undoubtedly very suited for cultivation. Their bodies and spirits were no doubt very valuable to evil soul masters.

As a result, the Holy Ghost Church regarded them highly. Once the war escalated into a full-scale one, these hostages would lose their significance, and the Sun Moon Empire wouldn't keep them alive anymore. They would try to make them submit, and if they refused, they would be killed.

The Holy Ghost Church would love to take the lives of these hostages.

The seven from the Tang Sect who had come this time were not afraid of evil soul masters. All of them possessed their own special abilities. However, this was under the premise that the evil soul masters they faced were around the same rank. If they met a Titled Douluo, they would be annihilated!

Huo Yuhao had to be extremely cautious because of this.

After pondering over his reasoning again, Huo Yuhao entered a deep meditative state to recover the energy he had drained during the day.

His spiritual sea glittered, and slight spiritual undulations pulled his mind toward it.

"Oh? Brother Skydream?" Huo Yuhao was a little surprised as he called out.

He wasn't the same right now as he was before. His spiritual sea was completely under his control. As a result, he could sense the origin of the spiritual power drawing him as his mind was drawn into his spiritual sea.

The Skydream Iceworm's body drifted quietly in Huo Yuhao's golden spiritual sea. He appeared very leisurely.

After Huo Yuhao had entered the Yin-Yang Love Querying Valley, the Skydream Iceworm and the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion both went into deep sleep. Only the little Snow Lady wasn't affected. The two of them had only recovered after he left the Love Querying Valley.

At this point, Skydream Iceworm woke up, which left Huo Yuhao surprised.

"Yuhao, your improvement has already surpassed our expectations." The Skydream Iceworm was smiling widely.

Ever since he had fused with Huo Yuhao, the Iceworm had started to become more and more like a human.

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Huo Yuhao smiled back and said, "I only managed to improve so much due to your strength."

The Skydream Iceworm chortled and said, "At least you haven't forgotten your roots! That force then was simply too scary!"

"Oh? Are you talking about the Yin-Yang Love Querying Valley?" After hearing Skydream mention that place, Huo Yuhao's gaze turned cold. If not for the valley, Wang Dong'er wouldn't have been put into a coma. Even though his soul power was increased by five ranks before he left, he didn't have a good impression of that place.

The Skydream Iceworm sighed and said, "Don't be sad. We could feel what happened to you. However, we were suppressed by that force, and couldn't wake up. Even if we were awake, we wouldn't have been able to help you with anything. Don't even think about resisting that force. If we are not wrong, the force hidden within the valley might be related to the gods."

Huo Yuhao was moved. "Brother Skydream, are you saying that there are gods there? Is it true that that valley was where the Love God perished?"

The Skydream Iceworm said, "I don't know if it's really the Love God. However, I'm afraid that only the strength of a god can suppress the spiritual origins of both the Ice Empress and myself. We couldn't even think of resisting it. Don't waste your effort trying to resist it, it's impossible. Furthermore, we could also sense that it held no ill intentions toward any of you."

"No ill intentions? Dong'er was almost tortured to death!" Huo Yuhao said coldly. He clenched his hands into fists, and his gaze turned cold. He wasn't the old Huo Yuhao anymore. In the past, he would have cursed or lost his cool entirely. But as he grew up and experienced more things, he became steadier and more composed.

The Skydream Iceworm shook his head and continued, "Alright, we'll not talk about that place anymore. In any case, don't return there. Talk about yourself. When we woke up this time, we discovered significant changes to your body. You were actually able to fuse the strength of both the Ice Empress and the Snow Empress?"

Huo Yuhao said, "I'm only at the initial stages of fusion. I think the martial soul the Ice Empress passed to me isn't complete, even though it's Ultimate Ice. More accurately speaking, there's a chance of making it stronger. Furthermore, I haven't been able to digest the origin of the strength the Ice Empress left behind, mainly because my cultivation is lacking, and my Elemental type is still a little different from the Ice Empress. That's why I tried to tap into the Snow Empress' strength after fusing it with the Ice Empress to increase the quality of my martial soul."

After hearing Huo Yuhao's words, the Skydream Iceworm was silent for a moment before he sighed and said, "Yuhao, do you know what you're talking about? Increasing the quality of your martial soul? It's not something that has ever happened among humans or soul beasts. Martial souls are innate. If you are able to increase the quality of your martial soul, you'll be the first person to do so."

Huo Yuhao wasn't too concerned with this. "It's probably because I'm lucky. The Snow and Ice Empresses are almost of the same Element. More importantly, their strengths aren't conflicting. These are the reasons why I'm able to proceed."

The Skydream Iceworm said, "It seems like you are very familiar with your body's condition. Since you can achieve this, you can start absorbing the origin power the Ice Empress left in your body. Your

cultivation speed will increase that way. At the same time, you can slowly absorb the most essential part of the spiritual power I left in your body. The biggest problem that you have right now is your body. Your body isn't strong enough. It needs to be strengthened further. Otherwise, you'll experience problems not long after you absorb this power."

Huo Yuhao nodded and asked, "I understand what you mean. Do you want me to continue fusing soul bones?"

The Skydream Iceworm replied, "Yes. In addition, the next soul bone you fuse will need to be of higher quality. The soul bones that you have now are the Ice Empress' skeleton, the Ice Jade Scorpion Left Arm Bone, and that left leg bone that allows for Instant Teleportation. Honestly speaking, only the Ice Empress' skeleton is able to slightly increase your physical strength. The other two soul bones are less effective at increasing your strength due to the fact that they have special abilities. As a result, the skull, right arm and right leg bones that you are going to fuse with next have to be focused on increasing your physical strength. In this way, you can better fuse with the strength of the Ice Empress.

"As for the Snow Empress, the origin power that she left behind will become a self-sustaining entity on its own, and won't be absorbed by you, as she has become your Spirit. However, it'll continue to contribute to your physical growth. I believe you can feel this, too."

Huo Yuhao replied, "Alright, I'll try to find suitable soul bones as quickly as possible. However, soul bones are too important to soul masters. In the eyes of any soul master, soul bones are absolute treasures. It isn't going to be easy to obtain them. Moreover, I need those of sufficiently good quality. I can only search for them slowly.

"Furthermore, my body isn't a glaring problem yet. After fusing with the immense life power of the Life Gold, my current physical state can help me last until I've obtained eight rings. The soul power from my Ultimate Ice won't drain my body, either. After I've obtained eight rings, I'll need to further strengthen my body. On the other hand, I'm starting to develop some problems in terms of my spiritual power.

"After this closed-door cultivation, I can sense that my spiritual power seems to have increased. In addition, this increase is in terms of quality. However, I feel that my spiritual sea is unable to handle this increase anymore. After exiting my closed-door cultivation, I'm afraid of cultivating my spiritual power further. Is there any way I can solve this problem?"

The Skydream Iceworm shook his head and answered, "I don't have any special method to help you in that area. Your spiritual power didn't just come from me, a portion of it came from Elder Yi. Elder Yi had already taken half a step into the realm of Gods. His spiritual origin, or rather the fragments of his divine sense, had a trace of a divine existence within them. After you fuse with them completely, your spiritual power will be able to increase even faster, until you reach the concrete-immaterial realm.

"However, your brain will start to experience problems if your spiritual power becomes too strong. It's still the same advice – get soul bones, especially a skull! It must be of good quality too. The best choice would be the skull of a hundred-thousand year soul beast. Your problems will be solved if it's compatible. If your spiritual power can rise to another level, it will reach the level I was at when you first met me. When that happens, you'll be able to protect yourself even if your abilities won't increase significantly. It won't be easy for a soul beast to kill you."

Huo Yuhao laughed bitterly. "Brother, you called me in to say all this? I know everything you're trying to say! Can you give me more clues?"

The Skydream Iceworm said, "Why are you so rushed? I haven't chatted with you in a long time. Let's chat more. Of course I'm trying to advise you, just like I helped you capture Bingbing!"

"Don't call me Bingbing!" the Ice Empress' cold voice sounded. A streak of bluish-green light flashed past and the Ice Jade Empress Scorpion appeared above the Skydream Iceworm. She smacked a pincer on his head, and he immediately disappeared back into Huo Yuhao's spiritual sea.

Huo Yuhao was surprised. "Ice Empress, you're awake too!"

"Yes."

For some reason, Huo Yuhao felt that the Ice Empress sounded very weird. There seemed to be something else about her. She sounded... shy?

The Skydream Iceworm re-surfaced from another part of Huo Yuhao's spiritual sea, and he was fawning again. "Alright, I won't call you Bingbing. Why don't you sleep longer? I can tell Yuhao everything."

The Ice Empress coldly replied, "You are full of nonsense. You spoke for half a day without getting to the main topic. Yuhao, your soul power is already at a bottleneck. You need to obtain new soul rings to improve further. In terms of your spiritual power, we feel that you can consider finding a species of soul beast called an Evileye Tyrant. You can try to fuse with an Evileye Tyrant."

"Yes, yes, that," the Skydream Iceworm immediately added.

"Shut up." The Ice Empress snapped at Skydream, and he quickly shut his mouth. He looked indignant, but didn't dare to retort.

"What's going on with the two of you? I feel like something's wrong!" Huo Yuhao was curious as he looked at the Ice Empress, before looking at the Skydream Iceworm again. He didn't even seem to be interested when the Ice Empress mentioned an Evileye Tyrant, which was a type of soul beast he had never heard of before.

The Ice Empress snorted in fury, and glared at Skydream with her crystal-yellow eyes, which were filled with a threatening light.

"Nothing, nothing. Yuhao, why are you guessing blindly? Bingbing and I are purely friends. Our friendship is pure. Am I right, Bingbing?"

"Scram!..." The Ice Empress sounded a little weak right now, and her shyness was revealed once again.

"Alright, alright, I'll scram. Don't get angry. I'll scram." As he spoke, he flashed and disappeared into Huo Yuhao's spiritual sea. Huo Yuhao immediately felt the ring around his finger formed by the Skydream Iceworm's actual body was moving gently.

He was unmoved as he asked, "Ice Empress, what's an Evileye Tyrant?"

The Ice Empress seemed to return to her old self after the Skydream Iceworm left, and she said, "Evileye Tyrants are very powerful soul beasts. Their abilities differ greatly depending on their cultivation. They

originally didn't exist in the Douluo Continent, they are natives of the Sun Moon Continent. A few thousand years ago, the strongest Evileye Tyrant, known as the Evileye Tyrant King, once entered the Great Star Dou Forest. At that point in time, Skydream was also in the Great Star Dou Forest."

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After glancing at the place where the Skydream Iceworm had disappeared, the Ice Empress continued, "He personally witnessed a huge fight between the Evileye Tyrant King and the Beast God Di Tian, who is one of the Ten Great Savage Beasts. The Evileye Tyrant King was indeed very strong. Even against the Beast God, he still had a chance of victory. The Beast God's cultivation was around eight hundred and twenty-some thousand years, and he had overcome an additional bottleneck compared to the Evileye Tyrant King. The two beasts fought for three days and three nights before the Beast God managed to defeat the Evileye Tyrant King due to his superior cultivation.

"At that point, the Evileye Tyrant King tried to kill Skydream before he left. However, the voice of a mysterious existence suddenly sounded, and scared him off."

Huo Yuhao was stunned as he asked, "Mysterious existence? What mysterious existence is there in the Great Star Dou Forest?"

The Ice Empress replied, "I'm not too sure, either. Skydream only knows roughly. The Beast God Di Tian is equivalent to the most outstanding Ultimate Douluo, but there seems to be a stronger existence in the Great Star Dou Forest that is asleep. It might be like Elder Yi, halfway into the realm of Gods. It has been sleeping all this while, and probably only the Beast God knows how strong it is."

"Yes, yes. I once heard Di Tian call him 'master'." Skydream's voice sounded once again, but he didn't appear.

Huo Yuhao was stunned as he asked, "Are the two of you asking me to obtain the skull of the Evileye Tyrant King?"

"Fool, of course not!" the Ice Empress answered. "Evileye Tyrant is a species. There isn't just the Evileye Tyrant King. Furthermore, you might not even be able to obtain the skull of the Evileye Tyrant King. His eighth bottleneck is about to arrive. Initially, he wanted to snatch Skydream because of this eighth bottleneck. If he can't cross this bottleneck and really dies, his soul rings won't remain, although his soul bones will. Furthermore, Evileye Tyrants are very special because they can only produce skulls, and no other soul bones."

Huo Yuhao was greatly affected after he heard that they could only produce skulls.

Generally speaking, whether or not a soul beast would produce soul bones was up to chance. The higher the cultivation of a soul beast, the more likely it was for a soul bone to appear from it. Only hundred-thousand year soul beasts would definitely produce soul bones. Under such a situation, Huo Yuhao was facing a difficult task if he wanted to hunt and kill a soul beast to obtain a skull bone. Skulls were the rarest among the six types of soul bones!

This was why it was down to luck if he wanted to obtain a skull. In most large-scale auctions in the various empires, a skull would command an astronomical price, and someone would buy it immediately. It was harder than the hardest currency!

However, the possibility of obtaining a skull would greatly increase if there was a species of soul beast that could definitely produce skulls. In addition, it was almost a hundred percent possibility if Huo Yuhao managed to hunt a hundred-thousand year soul beast of this species.

Huo Yuhao was intelligent. He understood what the Ice Empress and Skydream meant and said, "In this case, the two of you are suggesting that I find an Evileye Tyrant and kill it to obtain its soul bone, since the Evileye Tyrant King has either likely died after failing to cross his bottleneck, or is trying to cross his bottleneck and won't disturb me. If I'm lucky, I might even come across the soul bone that he left behind along with his carcass. Am I right?"

"You aren't too stupid." the Ice Empress replied coolly.

Huo Yuhao laughed bitterly. "However, the problem is that an Evileye Tyrant won't be weak even if the Evileye Tyrant King isn't around. I don't understand what they're like, since I didn't learn about them in the Academy."

"I can tell you their characteristics. Evileye Tyrants live in groups, and they only live in the hottest and most humid environments. Since they're from the Sun Moon Empire, they must have a habitat that belongs to them. I don't think it'll be difficult to find out where their habitat is. As for their abilities, they are able to cause all types of spiritual interference and confusion to living creatures apart from their main offensive ability, the Evileye Ray. Unless it's the Evileye Tyrant King itself, an Evileye Tyrant won't be able to confuse you.

"You'll need to work for a soul bone, though. In addition, ask a few strong individuals from your Academy to follow you once this matter is over. Aren't there quite a few strong individuals in your Academy? We are only trying to help you find the greatest possibility for you to obtain a skull bone, but it's not absolute."

"I understand. Thanks." Huo Yuhao firmly remembered the Ice Empress' words before he detached himself from his spiritual world. He exited his deep meditative state naturally and subconsciously looked down at his own finger.

The ring that the Skydream Iceworm had changed into flipped over, and there were small and subtle words on it. If not for Huo Yuhao's powerful eyes, he wouldn't have been able to see them clearly.

The words were: Yin-Yang Love Querying Valley. I went through the same tests with her. I encountered many difficulties, and passed countless tests...

Huo Yuhao twisted his lips. "Tell me about the result." The Ice Empress wasn't like Skydream. If she wanted to sense what was happening in the outside world, she had to go through Huo Yuhao's spiritual power. Right now, Huo Yuhao controlled his spiritual sea completely. That's why Huo Yuhao wasn't afraid of the Ice Empress listening in on his movements in the outside world.

However, the Skydream Iceworm was different. His spiritual origin was with the Ice Empress, and thus he could only interact with Huo Yuhao through some special methods if he didn't want her to hear.

The result was that I managed to pass and obtained my reward. We even...

"Chi..." Huo Yuhao laughed when he saw this line of words appear. After that, he asked a technical question. "How does a worm and a scorpion do it?"

“Idiot. We turned into humans before we did it! You don’t even understand this, hmph...” After leaving behind this last line of words, Skydream Iceworm changed back into the ring, and his spiritual aura returned to Huo Yuhao’s spiritual sea.

Huo Yuhao was finally enlightened now. He revealed a weird smile on his face. “They are finally together. No wonder the Ice Empress seems a little different, even though she’s still as cold as Brother Skydream.

At this point, a faint and cold voice sounded. “What are you doing?”

“Ah?” Huo Yuhao lifted his head, and saw Ji Juechen looking at him with a weird look on his face.

“I’m not doing anything.”

“Why are you smiling at me with such a weird smile in the middle of the night. Don’t you think...?”

Huo Yuhao coughed. “It’s not intentional. You can continue with your cultivation.”

“Also, don’t smile so amorously. Although I’m very focused on my sword, I’m not completely clueless about other things. Furthermore, I won’t like a guy!”

“Shut up! Since when did you become so talkative?”

“We can fight if you aren’t happy.” n-)Ove**l**1n

“Fight my foot... are you tired of living? Cultivate!”

Ji Juechen actually revealed a smile at this moment. He twisted his lips as he looked at the exasperated Huo Yuhao. After that, he shut his eyes.

As he watched Ji Juechen re-enter his cultivation state, Huo Yuhao’s expression slowly turned normal again. He revealed a sense of loss, and seemed to have recalled when he first entered Shrek Academy with Wang Dong’er. Weren’t they on two similar beds then?

I still thought that she was a clean freak back then. Who knew that she was actually a girl? If I could return to the past, it’d be great, even if I have to go through the pain of cultivating again!

Dong’er, Dong’er!

Yearning was like a carving knife that carved Wang Dong’er’s unforgettable looks deep into his spirit.

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The night went on silently. In the morning, everyone from the Tang Sect started to get busy. Nan Qiuqiu and Ye Guyi posed as sisters, while Ji Juechen and Jing Ziyan posed as a couple. Huo Yuhao, He Caitou and Xu Sanshi acted on their own. The seven of them left the hotel and went around Sunrise City, acquiring information and gathering intelligence.

Huo Yuhao had the most important mission. He used his Spiritual Detection to survey Sunrise City once.

Just like he had expected, he didn’t find any hostages in the city. What did this mean? It meant that he should start looking for them underground.

The layout of the city was clear in Huo Yuhao’s mind through his Spiritual Detection.

It wasn't just the city center that had top-class soul tools. There were also top-class soul tools at the four corners of the city, but he had found no evil soul masters so far. Right now, there were at least one or two Class 9 soul engineers in the city. As he carried out a deeper level of detection, he could confirm that at least one of the soul tools in the city center had to be Class 9.

A Class 9 soul tool had to be operated by a Class 9 soul engineer or a Titled Douluo. Since a Class 9 soul tool had been set up, there had to be someone who could operate it!